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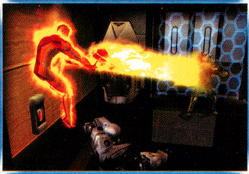

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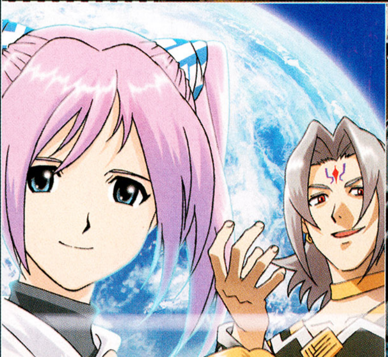

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This issue has so much E3 news in it, you can practically smell it. But, unlike E3's, that smell is a good thing.

NINTENDO POWER

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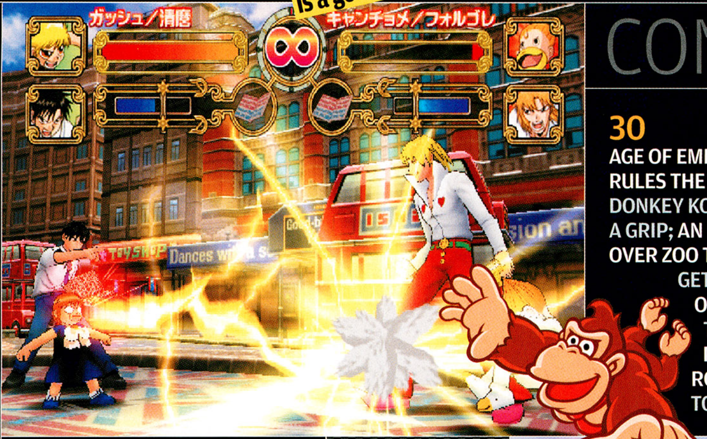

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Pulse

Busting into E3

Pssst! Hey, you. You want an E3 badge? Unless you hang outside the Los Angeles Convention Center in the middle of May wearing a retro Zelda tee, you've probably never had even a whisper of a chance to steal inside the annual Mecca of gaming. But this year is different for NP readers, because we're bringing E3 to you like never before. You'll read all the announcements, meet the developers behind the big titles and experience the show-stopping games through our hands-on impressions. We even indulge in some analysis, with each NP writer presenting his take on the show and providing his Top 10 list. Special thanks go to Robin Layton, whose photography brings the many faces and emotions of E3 to life in our post-show wrap-up. To top it off, we're handing you an exclusive DVD filled with video clips, led by the Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess E3 trailer. With all this content at your fingertips, you can experience E3 without the fatigue, deafness, thirst, heat prostration and really disgusting restrooms of the real deal. Consider yourself lucky.

And the NP content train doesn't stop there. Our cover story takes Mario Kart DS for a spin and considers how the newly announced Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection will shape the future of gaming. You'll hear from Zelda illustrator Yusuke Nakano in this month's Inside Zelda, uncover the secrets to Pokémon's amazing success, visit the new Nintendo World store in NYC, hear from the dynamic creators of puzzle sensation Meteos and sneak a peek at the ultimate video game collection in this month's Community pages. It's all in a month's work for the tireless NP staff.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

THE NEW NINTENDO POWER

I have been a subscriber for quite some time now and I have never been more excited to get an issue. I loved your magazine the way it was, but now I absolutely adore it. The sexy new image complements Nintendo's newly announced direction and their slick new Revolution and the Game Boy Micro. Great work!

Chase B.
via the Internet

I want to congratulate you on the new Nintendo Power. The magazine looks, feels and smells great! The more in-depth review section was an excellent addition. The expanded news section held my attention and the E3 coverage was amazing and more detailed [than in previous years]. May I also mention the Zelda preview article was exploding with brilliance? It made my mouth water with anticipation. Keep up the good work!

AJS_16
via the Internet

I caught a glimpse of your magazine's newly redesigned cover for the July 2005 issue, and I must say I am quite displeased. This new cover no longer makes Nintendo Power stand out from all the other gaming mags out there—it now looks just like them. I have been a faithful subscriber to NP since 1992, and this "new look" comes to me as your magazine's biggest disappointment. Some things are best left unchanged.

Matthew V.
via the Internet

I love the new and improved Nintendo Power. Like Scott Pelland said in Volume 193, "it was time for NP to grow up a bit, too." It seems to me you have done that, and in a great way. Longer news, more previews, longer strategies, a better reviews section; I'm happy with it all. You guys are even reviewing games before anyone else, like Killer 7. I can tell you listened to your fans, and I can proudly say I am happy with the magazine now.

Edgar C.
via the Internet

What's with the "new" Nintendo Power!? It looks like it's still in the '70's!

xxxmide
via the Internet

Holy #@&%! Nintendo Power has been revamped, tooth and nail. I'm a bit flabbergasted, blown away, excited. This coming from a reader who still has the first two issues of Nintendo Power in his collection, and even has serveral Nintendo Fan Club Newsletters. The changes [in the past] have been gradual, but this drastic change was much-needed to appeal to Nintendo's fan base, both young and old. It's sophisticated, fun, sharp, smart and stylish.

The two sections that stand out the most for me were, first, News. I was not expecting 12 pages of jam-packed information galore. And small print to boot! This is the kind of information often found in similar gaming magazines that was missing from NP. Bravo. If I had one suggestion, it would be to make the Game Watch Forecast a two-page spread with larger print (or the mag could come with a magnifying glass or eye monocle). The second section that stood out was Reviews. Both sections have always been my favorites, but now you've blown [the previous incarnations] out of the water.

I'm thoroughly shocked by the mature NP makeover, and terribly excited to ride the next-generation wave with you. Keep it up!

AJ B.
via the Internet

I got my issue today and decided to respond to your inquiry about opinions on the new layout. I have been a subscriber since issue 16, and up until now, I have been satisfied with what I was getting. Sure I had reservations about some stuff, but the basic things that Nintendo Power had started out with were still there. This new layout is alien to me. There was the barest of actual game help, and one of those strategy sections was for yet another Pokémon game. You may feel that Nintendo Power needs to "grow up," but in the process the magazine has become a copy of all the other cookie-cutter game magazines that are out there. This is not the Nintendo Power I grew up with, and for the first time, I am having doubts as to if I should renew my subscription when the time comes. I'm sorry, but I am disappointed.

bmgamfrk22
via the Internet

Oh my goodness! Nintendo Power has been completely redesigned! Overall, I like the changes that have been made. I was a little worried about the new reviews section at first because there is only one reviewer. However, if you regularly throw in counterpoints by other crew members (like in the Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones review), then everything should be fine. But here's my main concern: Does the new design mean the end of the Mr. T jokes?

Philip R.
via the Internet

Must . . . resist . . . urge . . . to beat . . . dead . . . horse.

I had just gotten used to the new Pulse when BAM!, you change it yet again. Can't you guys make up your minds?

Trevor R.
via the Internet

Sorry, Trevor. We promise not to change it again for at least another month or two.

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD

If that chainsaw guy [from Resident Evil 4] ever came to my house, what do you recommend I do?

Evan B.
via the Internet

Unless you're the proud owner of a Chicago Typewriter, the best you can probably hope for is to avoid crapping yourself before you run away.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

I wanted to say that there's really a lack of Transformers games out there. I've been discussing this with my fellow Transfans, and we think it would be cool if there was a new TF fighting game with characters and arenas from every generation [in the franchise].

Bass25
via the Internet

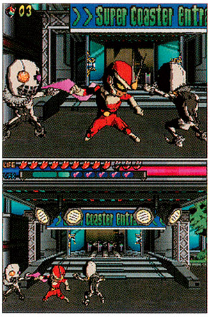
Staff writer Steve T. is a huge Transformers geek as well, so this is a topic near and dear to his heart. While he agrees that the dearth of Transformers games borders on criminal, he thinks the franchise really lends itself to a turn-based strategy game. Think about it. Each Transformer could require a different amount of Energon to bring into battle, their robot and alternate modes would each have unique attacks and abilities, and you'd have to decide whether to have the Constructicons, for instance, merge to form Devastator, or whether they'd better serve a particular objective as six separate units. It would be the greatest game ever.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

I think the DS is an incredible machine with a lot of potential. My problem with it is that it isn't being used to its full capacity. It seems to me that basically all of the games out right now, save a precious few, are just childish minigames that revolve around the touch control and dual screens. Developers need to make games more like Metroid, Spider-Man or Mario 64, which have the option for touch control but don't completely revolve around it.

Justin
Illinois

Don't worry, Justin. This year's E3 was an embarrassment of riches as far as the DS was concerned. A number of games on display, including Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow and Viewtiful Joe DS, made clever use of the touch screen, but didn't rely on it as the sole means of delivering compelling gameplay.



>LETTER OF THE MONTH

I've been a subscriber since the days of Super Mario RPG, so when I got to the end of Volume 192 and saw "The Next Big Thing" in bold white letters, I had to wonder what you guys were planning. Well, it seems that today I got a small taste of what's to come, and I can't wait for more. To me, connecting with the various readers and gamers across the world is just as important as what's coming out in the next few months, and I'm more than happy with what I've seen.

On that note, I think I'll move on to the other big news: Revolution. Today, the gaming public learned that we're getting a walk down memory lane in a big way. The ability to play such games as Super Mario RPG, Super Mario Bros., F-Zero and Final Fantasy III brings together a very large gap in generations. I know my mother doesn't like the 3-D games as much, but loves the days of the Super NES and NES, so this will be great news for her.

Benny C.
via the Internet

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Since the Nintendo Revolution is going to be so revolutionary, why not start off with a new genre when it launches? How about a second-person shooter, for instance? I mean, there are first-person shooters and third-person shooters, but what about second-person?

Mr. BLT
via the Internet

That's a great idea! Wait . . . if first-person is the shooter's perspective and third-person is an omniscient perspective, wouldn't second-person be the perspective of the guy getting shot?

SHARE THE JOY

I think that all games, with a few exceptions, should have co-op and mulitplayer modes. I'm tired of renting or buying a game, only to find out that if I want friends over to see it, they have to sit and watch me play. For example, why didn't Baiten Kaitos have a duel mode or something for two players? With the new Splinter Cell, the addition of co-op modes makes it so much more appealing because my friend and I don't have to take turns like we did with the first Splinter Cell.

Daniel C.
via the Internet

We wholeheartedly agree, particularly with regards to co-op play. When done right, it can be incredibly rewarding and can offer a welcome respite from always trying to destroy each other. Of course, certain members of the NP staff (Chris) have a hard time grasping the concept of cooperation.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW ROBOT OVERLORDS

In older issues, I noticed that some [letters] were sent via the Internet and some through [snail] mail. Now all of them are sent by e-mail. Soon the mailboxes will be empty and the computers will take over the world!

Edgar R.
via the Internet

That grim future is closer than you think. Have you seen the new Qrio robot? It can throw things! Today, baseballs; tomorrow, grenades.

"WHO ARE YOU CALLING ADORABLE? BOW BEFORE YOUR NEW MASTER, WORTHLESS HUMAN."

A BATTLE FOR THE AGES

If I diss the Nintendo DS, will Reggie Fils-Aime kick my ass and take my name?

Penguin_Ninja
via the Internet

That Reggie is a man to be feared there is no doubt. We've heard that penguin ninjas are not to be trifled with either, however. Let's just say it's a confrontation we'd rather see avoided.

DOGGIE HEAVEN

I have a question about the game Nintendogs. If you leave your DS off for a long time, will your puppy . . . die?

John R.
Illinois

No, but a virtual PETA representative will come to your house and annoy you to death. That's a joke! We kid the animal rights advocates!

PLEASE WRITE US:

pulse@nintendopower.com

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Do any of you guys at NP drive or own any really cool cars? If ya do, show a photo!

The bubblegum guy
via the Internet

You know it! Here's a picture of Steve's wicked red big rig.

MO' MONEY?

I'm really excited about the upcoming Nintendo Revolution (mostly because it's Wi-Fi ready and I have a wireless network already set up in my house), but a shadow has been looming over my anticipation. Will we have to shell out $75-80 for next-gen games? $50 for GCN games has already been hard on my budget, though Nintendo's done a great job with the $20 Player's Choice games. I just hope that I won't go bankrupt trying to purchase Super Smash Bros. 3.

Michael F.
North Carolina

Rumors of game prices spiking for the next-gen consoles have been circulating for quite some time. One of the reasons Nintendo is focused on keeping development costs down is probably to prevent that from happening on the Revolution.

LOVE LINE

This year I fell in love with a girl. I also learned that she is going out with one of my friends. This made me so mad that I can barely even feel joy when playing my favorite games. Do you have any advice on what I should do?

Justin
via the Internet

You might consider getting a new "friend".

BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Recently, many companies, including Nintendo, seem to be trying too hard to please their target audience. Ironically, doing this can alienate the player instead of doing what the ideal game is supposed to do—create a fun and memorable experience. Take the Donkey Konga franchise for instance. The original was, and still is, an incredible game. Although it had a fairly bizarre soundtrack, including [everything] from children's tunes to video game remixes, it did a good job [of] making sure that there was something for everyone. Unfortunately, its sequel does not have this trait. With relatively dated hip-hop and other tunes on its soundtrack (some of which don't even sound like they're supposed to be drummed to, like REM's "Losing My Religion"), it seems as if Nintendo was trying much too hard to try to please [a particular] audience. If you look at Konami's Beatmania franchises, they [feature] many songs that seem to be made for the game. On the flip side, Donkey Konga's songs aren't even sung by the original artists.

Andrew H.
via the Internet

While we weren't entirely satisfied with Donkey Konga 2's soundtrack, we did think it was a substantial improvement over the first game's. Everyone's musical tastes are different, though, so your mileage may vary.

GET CONNECTED

I have been reading that the DS will soon be able to access Wi-Fi hubs. The thought of being able to play with someone who is anywhere on the planet is awesome. But I haven't seen [any mention of] when the service is going to start. Can you please tell me?

Dan F.
via the Internet

Nintendo has said that we'll be playing games on the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection by the end of the year, but hasn't given an exact date yet. We'll let you know as soon as we hear anything, but in the meantime, you'll find more information on the service (and on Mario Kart DS) in this month's cover story.

LEGENDARY EVIL

My friend and I have been fighting over which [series is] better, Resident Evil or The Legend of Zelda. I think that Zelda is better and he thinks that Resident Evil is better. I was hoping you could settle this once and for all.

Matt H.
via the Internet

It's an interesting question you pose, Matt, so we had the guys at MIT run a scientific comparison. You'll find the results of their study below.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA VS RESIDENT EVIL

BEST HERO

LINK
Arguably the greatest hero of all time, and the only one we know who can get away with wearing a green tunic.
TIE

LEON KENNEDY
Certified with every major governmental organization as a Total Badass. When crazed, axe-wielding villagers attack, he supplexes them.
TIE

GREATEST VILLAIN

GANON
He's Ganon. 'Nuff said.
WINNER

NEMESIS
Basically a demonic Kool-Aid Man, which is about the greatest thing ever. He was portrayed as a total pansy in the second movie, though.
LOSER

BEST SIDE CHARACTER

TINGLE
If we measured this category by how creepy the character is, Tingle would run away with it.
LOSER

MERCHANT
We're not measuring this category by how creepy the character is. Besides, the merchant buys our stuff for a fair price.
WINNER

TIE! THE FINAL VERDICT TIE!

Haha! We wussed out! The last thing we need is hundreds of rabid fans sending us angry letters. We get enough of those from the That's So Raven contingent.

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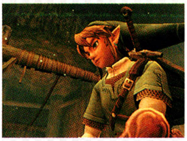


>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

We put the odds of Twilight Princess falling from the top of this list before its release at about 1,000,000,000,000:1.

1 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2 Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
3 Shadow the Hedgehog
4 Prince of Persia 3
5 Mario Baseball

PLAYER
104
SCORE
20600

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

You say you want the Gunstar Super Heroes. You'd better prove it when the game comes out. We know where you live.

1 Gunstar Super Heroes
2 DK: King of Swing
3 Yoshi Topsy-Turvy
4 Sigma Star Saga
5 Rebelstar: Tactical Command

>NINTENDO DS

Without a doubt, Mario's most intriguing work this year will be on the DS.

1 New Super Mario Bros.
2 Mario Kart DS
3 Animal Crossing DS
4 Mario & Luigi 2
5 Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow

Where's Grape Ape?

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

One of the most innovative games in years gets its due as Donkey Kong Jungle Beat debuts at the top of the sales chart.

1 Donkey Kong Jungle Beat
2 Super Mario Sunshine
3 Dragon Ball Z: Sagas
4 Pokémon Colosseum
5 Star Fox: Assault
6 Super Smash Bros. Melee
7 The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
8 MVP Baseball 2005
9 Animal Crossing
10 Mario Party 6

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

As *Star Wars* fever sweeps the nation (perhaps for the last time), fans are looking for their fix wherever they can get it.

1 LEGO *Star Wars*
2 Mario Party Advance
3 The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap
4 The Incredibles
5 The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie
6 Pokémon FireRed
7 Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
8 Disney Princess
9 Pokémon LeafGreen
10 Robots

The defenders of the galaxy have never looked more adorable.

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

In some small way, Wario has touched us all.

1 WarioWare: Touched!

2 Super Mario 64 DS

3 Yoshi Touch & Go

4 Rayman DS

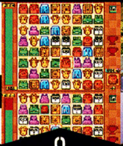
PIKACHU
MUNCHLAX

5 Pokémon Dash

6 Robots

7 Asphalt: Urban GT

8 Polarium



9 Zoo Keeper

10 The URBZ: Sims in the City

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

KONAMI

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[Trap Card]

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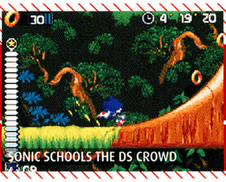
SSX: BORED WITH BOARDS?

ZERO HOUR FOR MEGA MAN



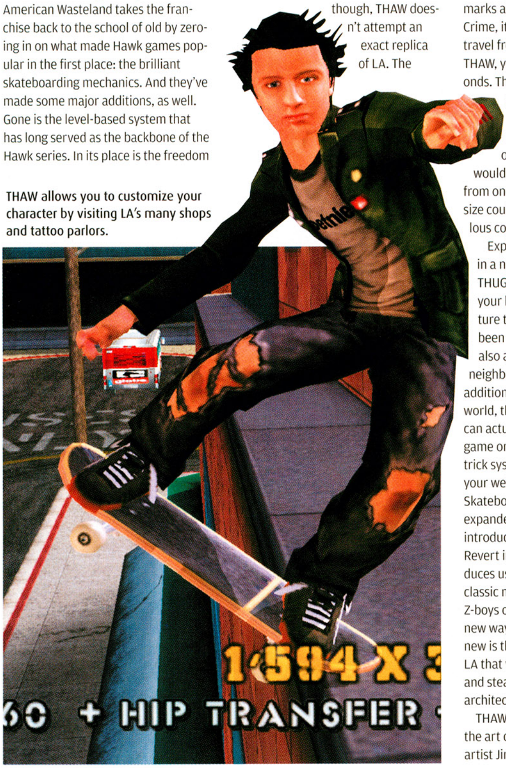
SONIC SCHOOLS THE DS CROWD

SKATE AND DESTROY

Hawk Attacks LA

After too much THUG-ery, Neversoft returns to the roots of the Hawk franchise and of skateboarding itself in American Wasteland.

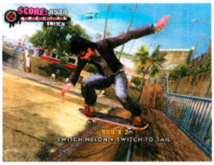
After Tony Hawk's Underground and THUG2 strayed from the basics with comedy relief overload, Hawk fans demanded a change. Tony Hawk's American Wasteland takes the franchise back to the school of old by zeroing in on what made Hawk games popular in the first place: the brilliant skateboarding mechanics. And they've made some major additions, as well. Gone is the level-based system that has long served as the backbone of the Hawk series. In its place is the freedom to explore the expansive wasteland of Los Angeles, the locale in which skateboarding was born.



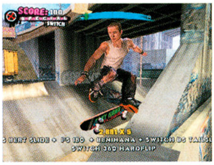
THAW allows you to customize your character by visiting LA's many shops and tattoo parlors.

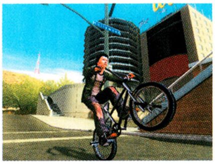
Unlike True Crime: Streets of LA, though, THAW doesn't attempt an exact replica of LA. The environment is much more of a stylized re-creation of the city, condensing the uninteresting areas and focusing on recognizable neighborhoods, landmarks and skate locations. In True Crime, it took about 10 minutes to travel from Hollywood to downtown; in THAW, you can do it in about 30 seconds. This is not to imply that THAW's LA is small. Activision informed us that if you skate straight through the city without performing any tricks, it would take roughly 10 minutes to get from one end to the other. A city that size could make for some pretty ridiculous combos.

Exploring LA in THAW can happen in a number of ways. Like in the THUG games, you can depart from your board and move by foot (a feature that Neversoft promises has been vastly improved). Buses are also available to get you from one neighborhood to another. The biggest addition to transportation in the Hawk world, though, is the BMX bike. You can actually play through the entire game on a BMX bike using an all-new trick system that requires balancing your weight while performing tricks. Skateboarding tricks have been expanded upon as well. Similar to the introduction of the Manual and the Revert in previous games, THAW introduces us to the Bert Slide—a classic maneuver made popular by the Z-boys of Dogtown—that serves as a new way to tie combos together. Also new is the Skate Ranch, a skate park in LA that you can customize by finding and stealing the 40-plus pieces of architecture throughout the city.



Ignoring LA's ordinances can be achieved on both a skateboard and a BMX bike.





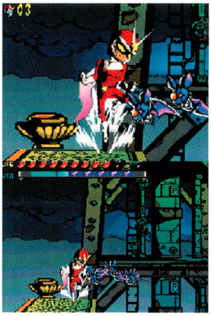
THAW's BMX trick system looks to be complex enough to hold its own opposite the skateboarding.

THAW's unique vision of LA relies on the art of legendary surf and skate artist Jimbo Phillips. Phillips created comic book panels that saturate the cut-scenes and contribute to the game's unique vibe. American Wasteland for GCN looks to be a great new direction for the franchise, and while we can only speculate on the GBA and DS versions at this point, we know that the DS release will include multiplayer Wi-Fi capabilities.
—Andy M.

DOES VJ GET OT?

Henshin-a-go-go Transforms Joe—Twice!

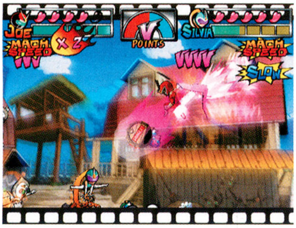
Viewtiful Joe's got two games under his belt, so what's a hero to do for his follow-up? Two more—and we're not sure which one's more insane.



In previous VJ games, a flurry of bats could be a pain to wipe out. But by flipping the DS screens, you can crush each bat with your thumb.

Joe may be moonlighting on other systems nowadays, but Nintendo gamers (an open-minded bunch who instantly got the superhero punk's renegade gameplay) will forever think of him as one of their own, and Capcom is rewarding VJ loyalists with two games due out this winter.

Viewtiful Joe DS will bring the cel-shaded side-scroller to life on the dual screen in surprising detail, with one screen framing the action-platformer from a distance while the other is zoomed in on Joe. While the butt-kicking controls will be similar to VJ's previous games, the DS's unique nature has allowed the developers at Clover Studios to grant the player two new superpowers. When using the Joe Camera, you can flip the screens to put the zoomed action on the lower screen; in doing so, you can use your finger to poke the enlarged enemies out of existence, plus interact with the environment (shaking pillars until a perched item falls, or turning a crank to open the way forward). And you can use the split power when the whole scene is on the touch screen: you'll split the scene in half by slashing sideways, then drag the upper portion one way or the other. Huh? Wha? Hang on—it's the most outlandish power yet devised by Clover. An example: If there's a fire on one end of the room, and an overhead sprinkler on the other end, you'll split the scene and drag the upper reality sideways until the sprinkler is above the flames. Once the fire's out, you can make reality snap back into place. It's freaky—and one of the craziest touch-screen uses that we've seen.



Viewtiful Joe VFX Battle muscles up with the moves made famous by Joe and supergal-pal Silvia.

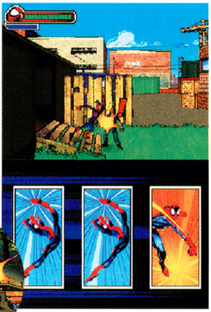
In Viewtiful Joe VFX Battle for the Nintendo GameCube, Capcom is drawing upon the series's my-way-or-the-highway style to make its mark on fighting games. Using the cast from the animated series (which we hope will hit the US this year), you'll be able to fight as characters VJ fans know—like Joe, Silvia and Captain Blue—plus newcomers like ice princess Sprocket. The GCN version, featuring single- and two-player modes, revolves around characters brawling for dibs on the lead role in a movie. But how will a series that's made its fame on powers like slowing time, speeding the action and zooming in for attacks work when two players are directing the action? Footage shows all powers at play in a way that threatens to tear the fabric of the universe itself with its fast-slow-zoom 2P clashes. We can't wait to throw down with this mindblower. —Steven G.

NO OFFENSE TO RAIMI

Spidey off the Leash

The movie games were blockbusters. But the web-slinger's next game will be the real deal—for Ultimate fans. NP exclusively reveals the DS version.

Ultimate Spider-Man, better than the original? Them's fightin' words among Marvel fans who revere classic Spidey. Yet the Ultimate comics have hugely reinterpreted the series, earning new fans who must expect a likewise rethink from Activision as it swings from movie tie-ins to its USM game. Treyarch has shaken things up for the console version (see page 51), as has Vicarious Visions, the developer of the DS's Spider-Man 2. The crew will integrate touch more deeply into USM as players control Spidey and his nemesis Venom, and will delve into Spidey's world more deeply than it could for SM2. That means more bosses (like the Ultimate versions of Green Goblin and Rhino), plus a story that will change based on mission completion. Ultimate Spider-Man will thwip the DS this fall. —Steven G.



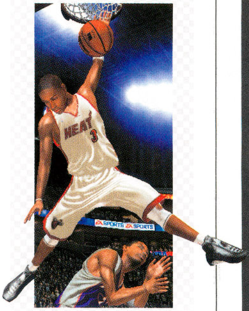
You'll trigger Spidey's combos on the upper screen by tapping comic panels on the lower one. Venom's action is on the touch screen, where you'll jab enemies to sling tendrils.

SPORTS COVERED

EA Turns Up the Heat

The publisher names Dwyane Wade for the NBA Live 06 cover.

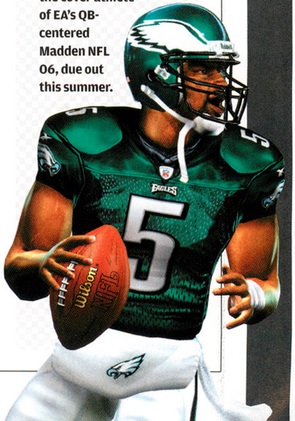
Things to do in your second year in the NBA: Lead your team in scoring. Check. Become EA Sports's NBA Live 06 cover athlete. Check. The Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade will fly in October on the GCN.



The Eagle Has Landed

Donovan McNabb to find his man on the GCN, DS and GBA.

With 300 pass completions last year, Donovan McNabb proved that he can hit his target. This year, he'll do it again as the cover athlete of EA's QB-centered Madden NFL 06, due out this summer.

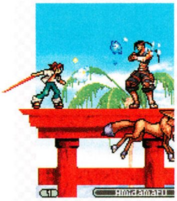


SUPERFAN NEWS

'Vania Bites Shaman

Konami dips Shaman King in its bloody-good 2-D castle side-scroller.

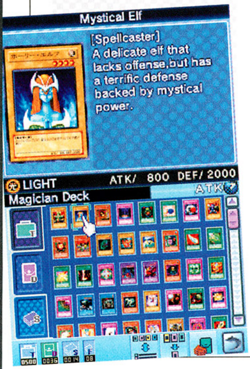
While the DS gets the sequel to Konami's brilliant Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow, the GBA will get a sequel to Shaman King: Master of Spirits. Konami infused the first MoS with lots of AoS, so that's great news for fans of 2-D castle-hacking—it's due in August.



Yu-Gi-Woes Are Over

Trading cards escape the single-screened straitjacket, at last.

So many cards, stats by the ton and a playfield—how'd TCG players ever do it on just one screen? In September, Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour will spread its TCG system over two DS screens as players spar wirelessly, playing 2-D cards that spring to life in 3-D.



Mystical Elf

[Spellcaster]
A delicate elf that lacks offense, but has a terrific defense backed by mystical power.

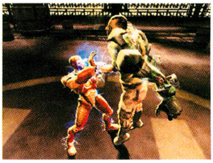
LIGHT ATK/ 800 DEF/ 2000

Magician Deck

STARK RAVING MAD!

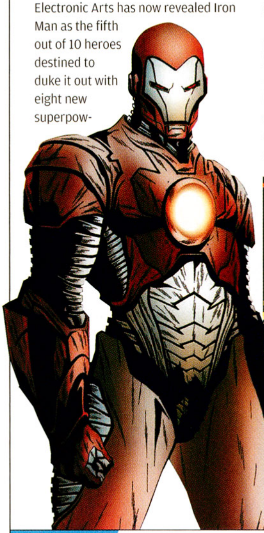
Marvel Nemesis Brings in the Big Gun

The most secret war since, well, the Secret Wars (forgive us; we're comic geeks) just added another hero to its high-powered roster.



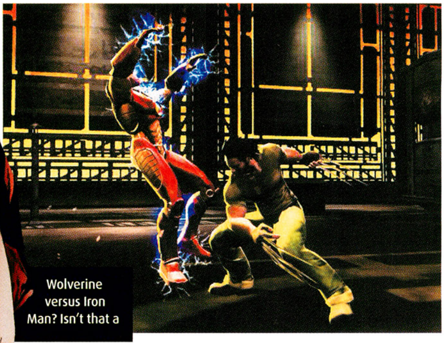
Iron Man will take on the Imperfect Brigade—a walking ammo pile.

Wolverine, Elektra, The Thing and Spidey. Four down, six to go. Or make that five. After teasing the world with scant details of Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects a few months ago, Electronic Arts has now revealed Iron Man as the fifth out of 10 heroes destined to duke it out with eight new superpowered beings (the titular Imperfects) that EA has created in collaboration with Marvel, and whose backstory will be chartered in a comic series that will lead to the launch of the GCN game in October.



In addition, the classic roster won't brawl only with the new kids on the block—they'll also tear into each other. We've seen Wolverine plunge his claws through Spider-Man's chest, seen the web-slinger bound up a pillar atop the *Daily Bugle* building to escape him, and watched Wolvie (who can't leap like Parker) hurl junk to knock him off his perch. Iron Man brings his own technopowers to the mix, such as his huge strength, hover power and arm cannons. EA's portraying the heroes in an especially gritty, brutal way in Marvel Nemesis, and we can't wait to find out who else will get dragged through the dirt.

EA has also announced that the fighter will hit the DS at the same time as the console version. NP will have the exclusive scoop on the handheld version next month. —**Steven G.**

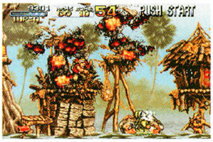


Wolverine versus Iron Man? Isn't that a

HEAVY METAL

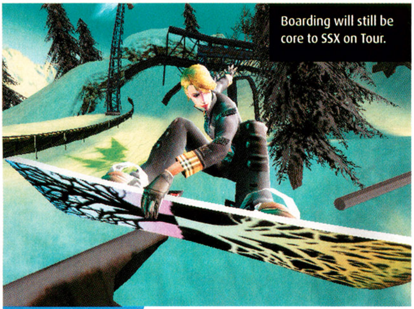
Overkill? No Such Thing for SNK's GBA Metal Slug

The arcade-original Metal Slug goes portable with classic levels, muscle-bound heroes and over-the-top boss battles.



The heroes of Metal Slug go all guns to get their game onto the GBA.

Storming through arcades in 1996, SNK's Metal Slug proved that war games don't have to be realistic to be popular. With an exaggerated art style, persistent enemy hordes and more explosions than the *Rambo* movies, the game found an eager audience and spawned a squadron of sequels. Last year, SNK published Metal Slug Advance, featuring new shell-shocked levels. At E3, SNK Playmore USA announced it will bring back the original game for the GBA with its six superchallenging 2-D missions intact. Marco, Tarma, Eri, Fio and the Metal Slug supervehicle take on General Morden, Allen O'Neil and an enemy army that will stop at nothing to see the Game Over message flash on the screen. The bullets will start flying in December.
—**George S.**



Boarding will still be core to SSX on Tour.

WAX ON, WAX OFF

The Peak of SSX?

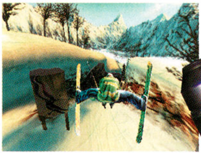
The fourth game in EA's boarding series takes on its most intense challenge—and doesn't banish skiers from the slopes, for once.

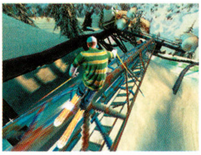
You always remember your first time playing Electronic Arts's SSX boarding series: after suffering a few face-washings while getting the hang of the controls, something kicks in, and you're suddenly pulling off extreme slope tricks and blazing down tracks like you were born on a snowboard.

Although the SSX series has changed its focus with each new game—the second title was as crazy as a night in Vegas, the third played it straight on a single mountain—it's always built its new concepts on the solid foundation of unparalleled board control. So what tricks will SSX on Tour, the next game in the series, pull off?

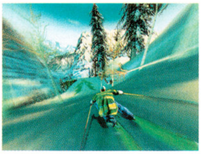
EA will bring one of its specialties, customized characters, to the new game, which revolves around proving your way from reg'lar Joe to slope rockstar. You'll push your reputation higher by taking on all-new shred challenges—and pulling out every trick and speed-demon stunt in the book—in order to catch the eye of those who manage The Tour. Once you finally break into the big time, you'll face off against the best SSX racers on the mountain.

In addition, the fourth game will pull off an SSX first: extreme skiers will join boarders, not a bad idea for keeping the series fresh, especially since SSX 3 pushed its board tricks to near-superhuman levels. You can pick either way to attack the all-new tracks, and screens show that the EA Canada developers—the longtime stewards of the SSX series—aren't pulling any punches when it comes to making skiing just as much of a daredevil experience as it's made boarding. Expect SSX on Tour to carve up the slopes on the Nintendo GameCube this fall. —**Steven G.**





Skiing maniacs join boarders to shred the slopes in SSX on Tour.



SSX boarders know when they're in the zone, and so will skiers.

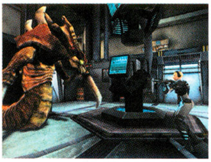
SUPERHOT NOVA

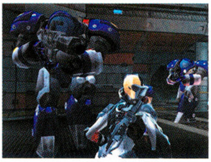
The Ghost Comes out of Her Shell

StarCraft: Ghost reemerges at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, and Blizzard goes ape over the game's developer.

After a long and tumultuous development cycle (the game was first announced in 2002), StarCraft: Ghost finally appears to be on track. Last summer, Blizzard announced that the game's original developer, Nihilistic Software, had ceased work on the project, and had been replaced by Swingin' Ape Studios, the team behind the critically acclaimed Metal Arms: Glitch in the System. At this year's E3, StarCraft: Ghost made its first public appearance since the switch, and Blizzard expressed confidence in the game's new developer by announcing its acquisition of the studio.

Set in the popular StarCraft universe, StarCraft: Ghost blends action and stealth to let you tackle each mission however you prefer. As Nova, an elite Ghost operative, you possess a variety of special powers, including thermal vision and a cloaking ability, which you can use to sneak past foes. In case you'd rather shoot it out, you'll also have access to an impressive arsenal of weaponry; everything from Perdition Flamethrowers to Torrent Shotguns. You can take control of vehicles, as well, and your fellow Terran troops will often fight alongside you (they'll even man the turrets while you pilot certain craft). Blizzard claims that the story will play a crucial role in the StarCraft saga. All in all, StartCraft: Ghost is shaping up to be a worthy addition to the franchise. Unfortunately, we have to wait a little longer to get our hands on the final product—the game isn't due for release until the first half of 2006. —**Steven T.**





Those mechanized soldiers don't stand a ghost of a chance. Ha!

Nova showed up at E3 with some heavy equipment.

BUNDLE ALERT

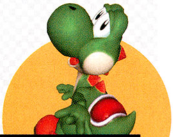
Super Trash Talkin'

A Super Smash Bros. Melee deal means more beatings for all!

In late August, a new bundle will pair SSBM with the platinum GameCube for $99.99 US (MSRP). Rookies will find that the fightin' extends far beyond SSBM itself, especially on Nintendo's message boards. Favorite character? Let the battle begin!

In a game full of cuddly creatures and out-of-shape plumbers, how can you not choose Ganondorf? He's a bad, bad man. —BADGUY712

It's Luigi. To see people's faces on Hyrule Temple when I come flying across the screen to nail them off the platform . . . priceless. —SIRTHURSDAY



Yoshi's my favorite because he can eat other players and poop them out. What's more humiliating than that? —SKIPPYKIP

FRIENDS! POWERS! PANTS!

SpongeBob Soaks Up Fun for THQ

With six games for three platforms on the way, the sponge who lives in a pineapple under the sea is making a splash.

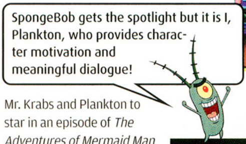
Nicktoons's ubiquitous yellow hero SpongeBob SquarePants has had a steady video game gig for four years, and in 2005, his interactive career goes into overdrive with a bushel of just-announced games from THQ.

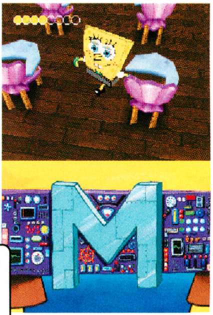
In his DS debut, SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger, our porous pal subs for the kidnapped Mermaid Man and summons superpowers by wearing the hero's belt. The game's 3-D environments are displayed on the top screen, while the touch screen allows you to manage the belt's abilities: Shrink Ray, Water Ball, Raging Whirlwind, Super Speed and Super Jump.

Due out in the fall for the GCN and GBA, SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants! is a four-player competition between the players' choices of Patrick, SpongeBob, Squidward, Sandy, Mr. Krabs and Plankton to star in an episode of *The Adventures of Mermaid Man & Barnacle Boy*. The results of the competition (played out in 30 party-style games) determine which characters appear in a 15-minute cartoon at the end of the game.

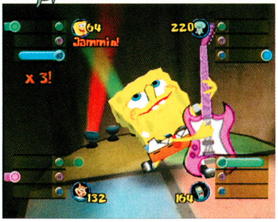
SpongeBob joins fellow animation icons Timmy Turner, Jimmy Neutron and Danny Phantom in Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite! for the GCN, DS and GBA in October. The cooperative adventure for up to four players has the quartet exploring 15 familiar locations, such as Retroville, Dimmsdale, Amity Park and Bikini Bottom, in an effort to keep Professor Calamitous from taking over the world. Judging by SpongeBob's coming video game domination, we're guessing the professor is going to have a tough time.

—George S.

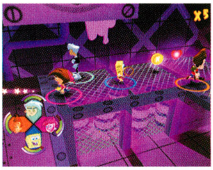

SpongeBob gets the spotlight but it is I, Plankton, who provides character motivation and meaningful dialogue!

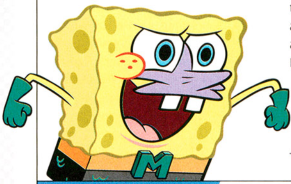


By interacting with Mermaid Man's utility belt, you can come to the aid of the Yellow Avenger.



Getting in his licks, SpongeBob shoots for stardom in Lights, Camera, Pants!



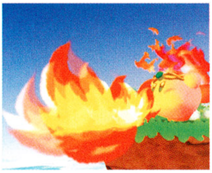


FUZZY DICE NOT INCLUDED

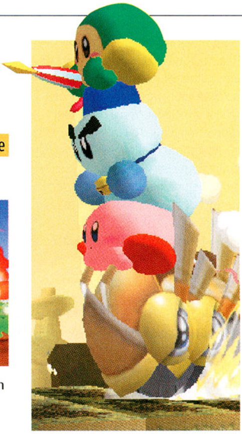
Tricked-Out Kirby

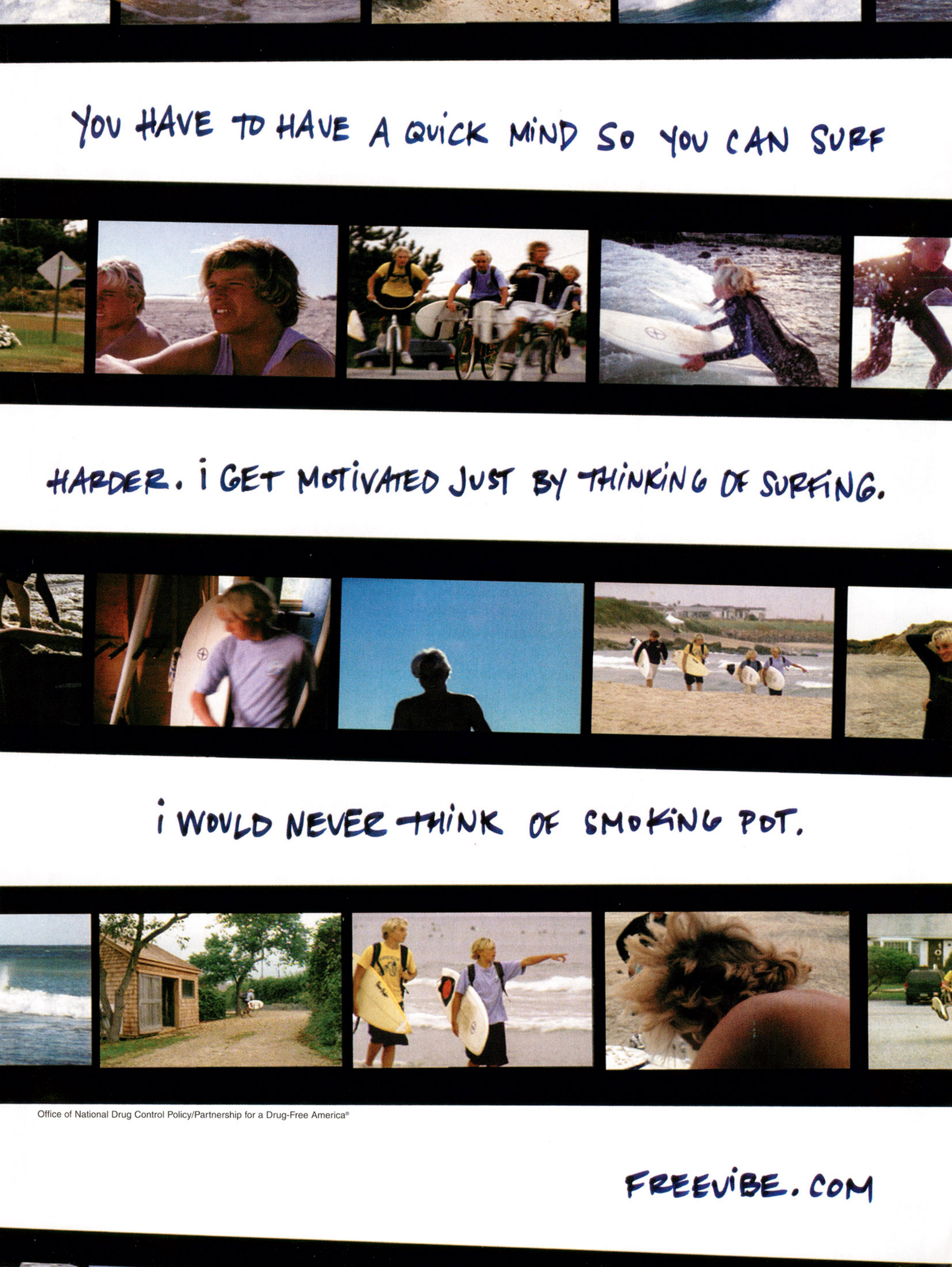
Slap on Wheelie rims and install a Mr. Frosty: finally, Kirby gets a sweet ride with a little help from his friends.

Last month, when NP broke details about Kirby's new method of travel (piling up creatures, then steering the posse) in his upcoming GCN game, we wondered if HAL Laboratory had finally gone off the deep end. Now screens show the crazy pile-on gameplay at work, with Kirby riding on just one critter or going totem-pole style with several passengers. The game's release date is still unknown, but one thing isn't: HAL is outdoing itself in the imagination department. —Steven G.



It looks like HAL will be sticking with some conventions, like Kirby roaming solo and copying foes' abilities.





YOU HAVE TO HAVE A QUICK MIND SO YOU CAN SURF HARDER. I GET MOTIVATED JUST BY THINKING OF SURFING. I WOULD NEVER THINK OF SMOKING POT.

Office of National Drug Control Policy/Partnership for a Drug-Free America®

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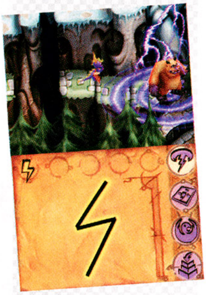
DUAL SCREENINGS

Spyro Flies on DS Wings

The dragon's cooking up more than sheep for his DS adventure.

Richer story, sketch spellcasting and . . . martial arts? Spyro: Shadow Legacy will see the dragon learn new tricks this fall, and will also throw in an RPG-lite experience system that lets Spryo learn new spells and moves.



Stupid? Not Possible

Looking for a great girl game? Kim Possible doesn't dumb it down.

Disney has done right by one of toonland's best heroines with its GBA platformers, and Kim Possible: Kimmunicator will bring her to 3-D via the DS in late '05. The game will turn the player into Kim's tech support (and make the DS into the Kimmunicator) when her hacker friend is abducted.

GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO DS
$50
100
DIG DUG

The Big News. In Short.

We're stoked to hear that **dinosaur-hunting Turok** will have life after Acclaim with Buena Vista Games. Note to Propaganda, which will develop the series for consoles and handhelds: the GCN's Turok: Evolution was a suckosaurus, so look back to Turok's killer N64 games for inspiration. . . . Who needs Vegas? Within the year, gamers will have a Strip's worth of gambling games on Nintendo platforms, especially with the latest additions of **World Poker Tour 2K6** (2K Sports) for the GBA and **Golden Nugget Casino DS** (Majesco). . . . Two titles previously announced for GCN will also be hitting handhelds: **Namco Museum 50th Anniversary** will bring Dig Dug, Galaga, Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man and Rally X to the GBA this August, and **Need for Speed: Most Wanted**, will rev up its fuzz-and-the-furious racing on the DS and GBA in November. . . . Quick, who begat Amminadab? Bzzzt! Time's up! Well, with any luck, **The Bible Game** will be multiple choice when it brings trivia to the GBA this October, so you can beat the system by guessing C for every question. . . . From the looks of **Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures**, Midway won't simply slap 'toon faces on generic platformers for its upcoming Cartoon Network games; players will combine the inseparable dorks into the Batter-Ed, Trampol-Edd and Tower-of Eddy on the GCN and GBA this fall. . . . The smog! The gridlock! The heat! Activision's had enough of LA for **True Crime**, so it's taking the pop-pop-two-in-the-head series to a new city. Which? Activision's being coy but better 'fess up fast, since the GCN game's due this fall. **— Steven G.**

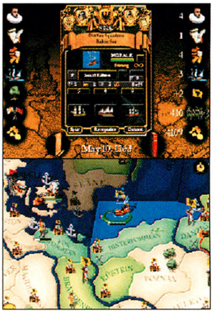
NOT-SO-INSTANT REPLAY

400 Years of Gameplay? The EU Gets Reshuffled

Europa Universalis II revisits European politics from 1419 to 1820. If you go to a liberal-arts school, you could get college credit for playing it.

Napoleon III once commented on the difficulty of ruling a country that produced 600 types of cheese. In Europa Universalis II for the DS, from Pocket PC Studios, you will be able to do just that as you select from 200 playable nations, including Napoleon Bonaparte's France, and set both domestic and foreign policies in an attempt to re-create or set a new course for history. Starting in the times of Joan of Arc and running through the Napoleonic Wars, the game allows you to send ships to protect trade routes, hire mercenaries to bolster defenses and even put missionaries on a path to spread religion.

The game has been successful in the PC format. Since DS touch control offers computer-mouse-style interaction, gamers should expect a similar playing experience. —George S.



A map on the bottom screen and stats on the top screen—all you need to exercise dominance.

Invasion of the Mega Men

Mega Man's games have always separated the men from the boys. But three upcoming titles should finish the job.

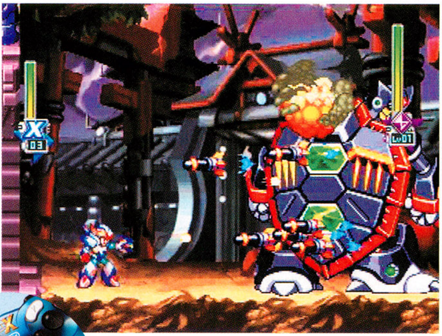
What system hasn't Mega Man conquered? Okay, maybe he skipped the Atari era, but in the 18 years since Capcom's hero made his big bang in the days of the NES, his universe has expanded rapidly.

And for each Mega Man series that Capcom's front-burnered, it's expanded that MM world at an annual pace—that means it's time for more Mega Man Zero and Mega Man Battle Network growth. (The original MM petered out in the '90s, and Mega Man X stopped side-scrolling in '03.)

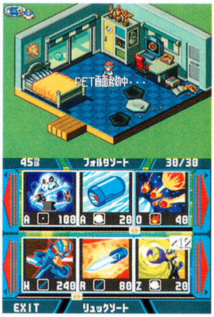
Mega Man Zero 4 for the GBA returns to the far-far-future world a century after the MMX series, where the engineered Reploids and humans are still at war. As always, it's up to Zero to try to restore order between the factions and dive into new platforming challenges. In MMZ4, Capcom continues to hone the "collect 'em all" Cyber-elf system that gives Zero special assists, and it adds the ability to change the weather (and thus alter landscapes), and a method for combining scavenged parts to make new power-enhancing chips. MMZ fans will have to wait until this fall to broker the latest peace.

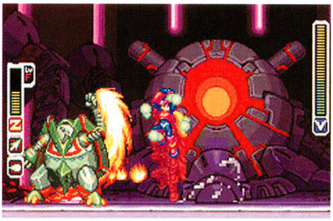
The cyberworld-saving RPG Mega Man Battle Network recently saw two GBA versions of this year's MMBN5—Team Colonel and Team Protoman, in which the human hero Lan worked with his Net Navi, Mega Man, to again liberate the Internet from evil forces. Capcom will release a special Nintendo DS edition of this fifth game in the fall, subtitled Double Team, which includes both versions, interlinked to let the player transport Navi battlers from one version to the other during missions. MMBN's complex RPG menu system begged for the dual-screen treatment, and the game will let players access maps and resources through the touch screen, plus enable battles via DS wireless.

And just as Capcom gave gamers a retrospective look last year with Mega Man Anniversary Collection, it'll do the same with Mega Man X Collection. The title will pack in the series's first six games, plus the kart racer Mega Man Battle and Chase, a former North American no-show. With the compilation set to hit the GCN this year, Mega Man's got a trifecta on Nintendo systems.
—Steven G.



Nubytech plans to release a GCN controller for Mega Man X Collection that will flash as players power up weapons.



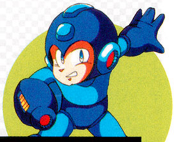


The Mega Man Zero series has developed a rep as one of the GBA's most challenging action platformers, and MMZ4 seems to take the complexity a step further.

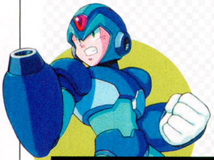
BLUE BOMBER 101

18 Years of Megachange

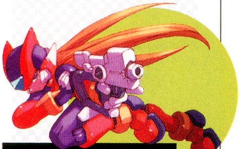
Mega Man's grown up, spun off and gone Net. Out of touch? Catch up.



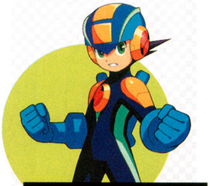
MEGA MAN: Big as 8-bit let him be, NES-era MM let players choose which bosses to take down first.



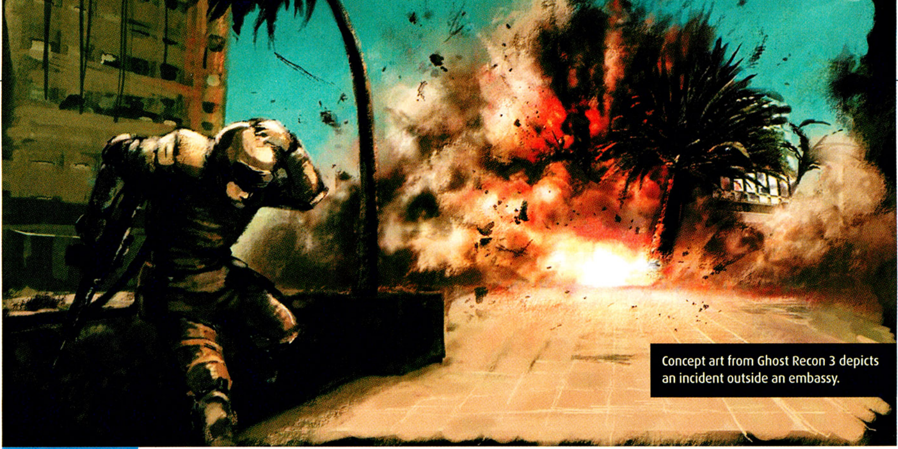
MEGA MAN X: The Super NES called for a new MM. He stuck with a standard, stealing powers from bosses—all animal in construction.



MEGA MAN ZERO: The oft-playable MMX sidekick, who gained new moves, not boss powers, got his own gig on the GBA.



MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK: A second GBA series reinterpreted MM and his classic foes as cyberspace entities in a complex RPG.



Concept art from Ghost Recon 3 depicts an incident outside an embassy.

QUIET EXPLOSIONS

Ubisoft Wages Secret War in Two Titles

The soldiers of Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 3 and Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown work under the radar to diffuse international incidents before they make the six o'clock news.

Wars that the world doesn't know about are the subject of two Tom Clancy titles, both on their way to the GCN late this year.

Set in 2013, Ghost Recon 3 takes place in Mexico City with a team of US Army elite soldiers assigned to stop insurgents from causing a crisis. The weapons and communications technology for the Ghosts mirror what US Army Special Forces may be equipped with eight years from now, based on research. The Integrated Warfighter System (IWS) uses a Cross-Com device that provides team members with satellite-transmitted information through their helmet monocles. The intel allows players to command the Ghost squad and direct artillery attacks and air strikes with speedy efficiency and pinpoint accuracy. The first Gulf War was dubbed the video game war. Ghost Recon 3 predicts a future in which the line between a game and a weapons system is even more blurred.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown also takes place in the near future, but the story is more personal than that of Ghost Recon 3. Taking on the roles of Ding Chavez and sniper Dieter Weber alternately, players must deal with a direct attack on Team Rainbow while attempting to stop a global threat.

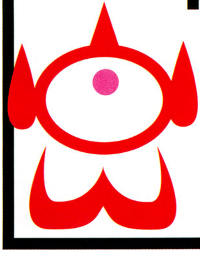
New items, such as motion trackers and the small, versatile MTAR-21 micro assault rifle, allow the team to fight through extremely close quarters and surprise their targets with techniques such as suppression fire.

Ubisoft promises that the game will push the limits of current-generation consoles to create stunning graphics, using rag-doll physics to make animation that is as real as it gets.

The Tom Clancy titles have been consistently strong performers for Ubisoft. The company appears to be ready to advance the franchises into the future, probably even past the years in which the current games take place. —**George S.**

DON'T-MISS Calendar

All groggy with the heat? A few games set to hit the street in the dog days of summer will make you sit up, bark and fetch.



6-21

Bomberman shares, cares.
If you and your buds have time to waste this summer, do yourselves a favor and nab this one. No series has reduced fragfests to a more addictive substance, and one DS card doles out eight-player versus games.

6-27

Meteos brings world of hurt.
Stylus stronger than the *Death Star*? Meteos makes it so. Music crazier than in most console titles? Meteos makes it so. Alien icons cooler than an armful of tattoos? Meteos mak— Blast! My cubicle was just obliterated!

6-28

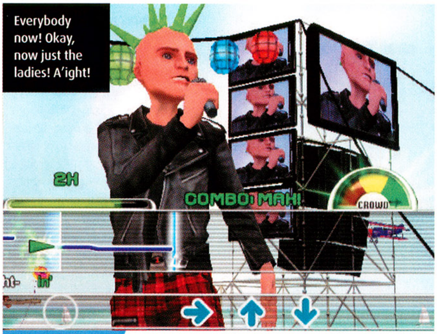
Sam Fisher infiltrates DS.
Who saw Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory coming to the DS? We almost didn't catch the game's quick stealth release in time. And Mr. Fisher still snapped our necks.

7-7

Killer 7 hits on 7-7. Get it? Pure comedy—and carnage.
Is it clever enough that we'll forgive Capcom for delaying the psychoshooter one month? It does have anime that features the head of a crazy guy going 4th of July over a crowd that oohs, ahhs and croaks. So, yes.

7-8

Fantastic or Craptastic Four?
The debate over the film's quality has raged for years since F4 superfans first heard about plans for a blockbuster. Want a taste before you go? Check out the GCN title from Activision, who knows a thing or two about hero games.



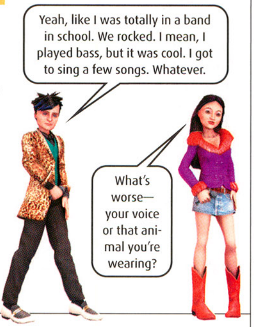
Everybody now! Okay, now just the ladies! A'ight!

GIMME A BEAT

Future Boy Bands of America, Unite!

With Karaoke Revolution Party, you don't have to be at a wedding reception, bowling-alley lounge or Japanese bar to make a total fool of yourself.

Up 'til now, the number of games combining karaoke and rhythm dancing has been limited to, well, none. Konami, the worldwide leader in games based on humiliating yourself in public, has expanded on two of its successful franchises, Dance Dance Revolution and Karaoke Revolution, to bring you Karaoke Revolution Party for GCN. So the title might be a tad predictable, but Konami promises a truly unique gaming experience. With a licensed dance pad and microphone, all you wannabe pop stars will get your chance to put your voices and dance moves on display at the same time. You can even customize the look of the onscreen character to match your stage persona. Karaoke Revolution Party offers over 50 songs for you to shake your thing to, including duet ditties that you and a friend can perform to together. The tunes range from karaoke staples like "Sweet Caroline" to modern hits like "Crazy in Love." Now all you have to do is find some friends who actually want to see you sing and dance. —**Chris S.**



Yeah, like I was totally in a band in school. We rocked. I mean, I played bass, but it was cool. I got to sing a few songs. Whatever.
What's worse—your voice or that animal you're wearing?

DOUBLE-TALL FIGHTER

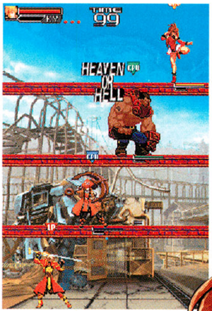
A Guilty Pleasure—Guilty Gear Strikes on the DS

All 21 battlers from Guilty Gear X2 #Reload—including Sol, Potemkin, May and Dizzy—enter the vertical DS arena for a 22nd-century smackdown.

Joining Advance Wars: Dual Strike and Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow on the "DS"-subtitles bandwagon, Majesco's Guilty Gear Dust Strikers offers multilevel vertical fighting action on both DS screens. Participants jump freely from one screen to the next midbattle and avoid loads of dangers, such as poison, fire and bomb traps as they take on three competitors.

Thorough customization allows players to switch between move sets and select attacks, such as Psych Burst and Roman Cancel, which they can use in Arcade, Survival and Vs. Battle matches.

The action spills over to 10 minigames, too, including Billiards and arm wrestling. When the dust settles this fall, fans will be in for a fun fighting experience. —**George S.**



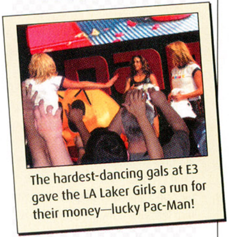
Four superequipped futuristic battlers go vertical in the first ever dual-screen fighter.

SHE'S ALL THAT!

Pac-Man Turns 25

Namco really knows how to throw a party for its golden oldie.

Despite a shake-up of Pac-Man's big schedule in '05 (Super Pac-Man Pinball, axed), Namco gave its celeb star treatment at E3, showing off Pac 'n Roll and Pac-Man World 3—and calling in the Namco E3 dancers to give the 25-year-old no less than their full attention.



The hardest-dancing gals at E3 gave the LA Laker Girls a run for their money—lucky Pac-Man!

Bratz Grows Up with THQ

Today, fashion dolls. Tomorrow, video game role models!

Under Ubi, Bratz didn't win respect in the gaming world, but THQ has big plans for Bratz Rock Angelz (GCN and GBA), which lets players customize their Bratz Girl's hair, makeup and outfits. You can't call BRA skin deep: you'll also globetrot for hot scoops for your fashion mag.

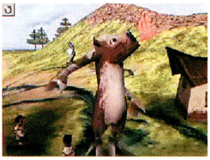
GODZILLA MEETS NINTENDOGS

Tyrannosaurus Tiger, I Choose You!

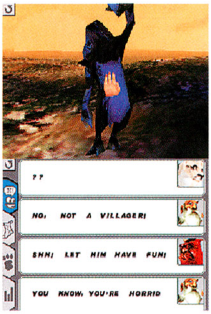
Black & White Creatures lets you slap pets? Someone call PETA! Wait—hold that thought. In this god game, your animal will eat people like candy—if you don't treat it ethically.

The choice between good and evil was the player's true struggle in Black & White, Peter Molyneux's groundbreaking PC god game. It just so happened that entire island villages got caught in the ethical crossfire. As a deity, you chose whether to help your worshippers or torment them. And although you were a disembodied influence over the land, you did have a giant animal sidekick that walked among your people—one that would idolize you and learn from your actions. It might help your people tend crops, or burn 'em down. It might pick up a person to pet him, or throw him lethally. It might even dance at village celebrations—or view the event as a dinner party. And that's where Black & White Creatures, Majesco's Nintendo DS spin on the PC game, focuses its gameplay. After selecting one of 10 different creatures, you'll go through the god game—raising a civilization up from the mud—working *only* through your beast, guiding it around the isle and directing its attention to objects (or people) by pointing and tapping on the screen via touch control, which echoes the PC game's mouse control remarkably well.

Gimme the 411 on the karaoke showdown and get me outta here! All these dirty critters are gonna make me 'N Stink!



Black & White's advisors return to argue on the DS, so you'll get an earful if your avatar eats people.

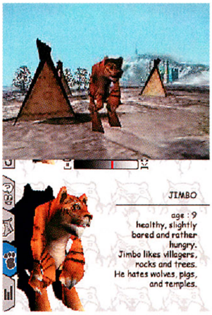


??

NO, NOT A VILLAGER!

SHH! LET HIM HAVE FUN!

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE HORRID



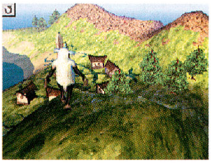
JIMBO

age : 9

healthy, slightly bored and rather hungry.

Jimbo likes villagers, rocks and trees.

He hates wolves, pigs, and temples.



You'll want to keep an eye on the status of your animal's personality, especially if you let it wander.

You can also interact with your creature using touch. It's a major part of the experience because, as in the PC game, your animal will develop a personality that changes over time based on how you treat it. If you see your megapet do something that you want to discourage—whether good, like helping a farmer, or evil, like scarfing him down—you'll want to give it positive strokes; if it exhibits behavior you want to discourage, slap it around. But abuse your avatar at your own risk; it will learn from you and treat villagers similarly.

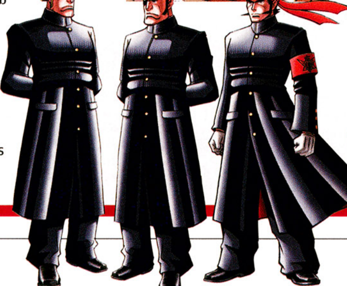
Fortunately, if your animal starts doing something you don't like, you can bark a stern "No!" into the DS Mic to make it stop. But since it's a creature with a mind of its own—not just a puppet—it may disobey you.

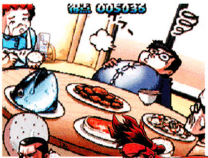
In addition to the solo mode for Black & White Creatures, developer Full Fat will go beyond the PC original with more modes, including a wireless multiplayer Creature Battle and (how fully phat is this?) a Creature Dance minigame. As one of the most fascinating projects on the DS horizon, you can expect a wait as its development plays out; this one won't hit until the second quarter of 2006. — **Steven G.**

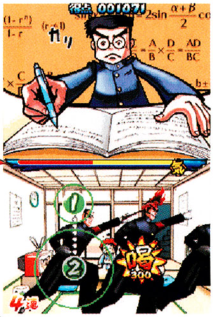
NEWS FROM JAPAN!

Failure Is Not an Option in Ouendan

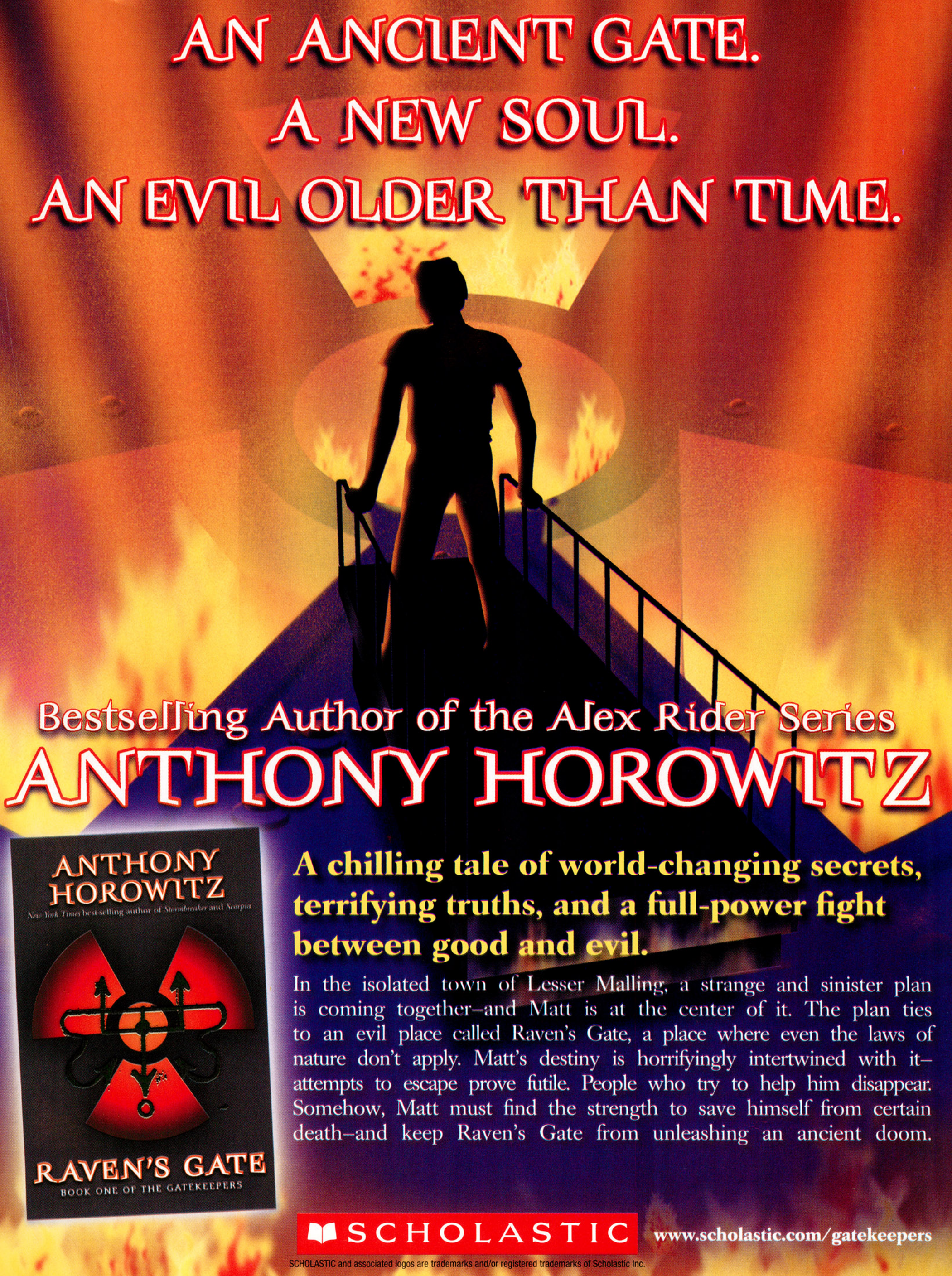
IT'S NO WONDER that Adam Sandler keeps starring in comedies. When the going gets rough, he always has fellow *Saturday Night Live* expat Rob Schneider stand up and cheer, "You can DO it!" We envy him—and the young hero of Ouendan, a quirky DS game in which manly cheerleaders burst into a kid's life to help him study smarter and eat better. The player's part is to keep the rally going via touch minigames: Succeed, and the kid is an overachiever; fail, and the kid hits the skids. Sounds as weird as Feel the Magic, so maybe we'll see this game skip the pond someday. — Steven G.







Cheer on, dudes: the boy's got piles of food and homework.


AN ANCIENT GATE.
A NEW SOUL.
AN EVIL OLDER THAN TIME.
ANTHONY HOROWITZ
New York Times best-selling author of Stormbreaker and Scorpia
RAVEN'S GATE
BOOK ONE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

Bestselling Author of the Alex Rider Series

ANTHONY HOROWITZ

A chilling tale of world-changing secrets, terrifying truths, and a full-power fight between good and evil.

In the isolated town of Lesser Malling, a strange and sinister plan is coming together–and Matt is at the center of it. The plan ties to an evil place called Raven's Gate, a place where even the laws of nature don't apply. Matt's destiny is horrifyingly intertwined with it–attempts to escape prove futile. People who try to help him disappear. Somehow, Matt must find the strength to save himself from certain death–and keep Raven's Gate from unleashing an ancient doom.

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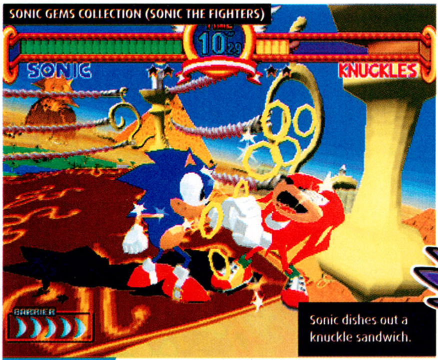
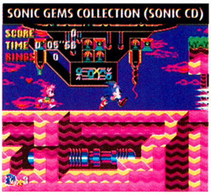


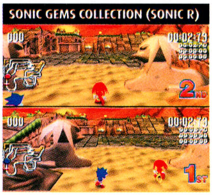
SONIC GEMS COLLECTION (SONIC THE FIGHTERS)

Sonic dishes out a knuckle sandwich.



SONIC GEMS COLLECTION (SONIC CD)

Sonic CD made up for all of those awful FMV games on the Sega CD.



SONIC GEMS COLLECTION (SONIC R)

Sega has cleaned up the textures in Sonic R. It looks far less pixelated than the Saturn original.

SONIC BOON!

The Year of the Hedgehog

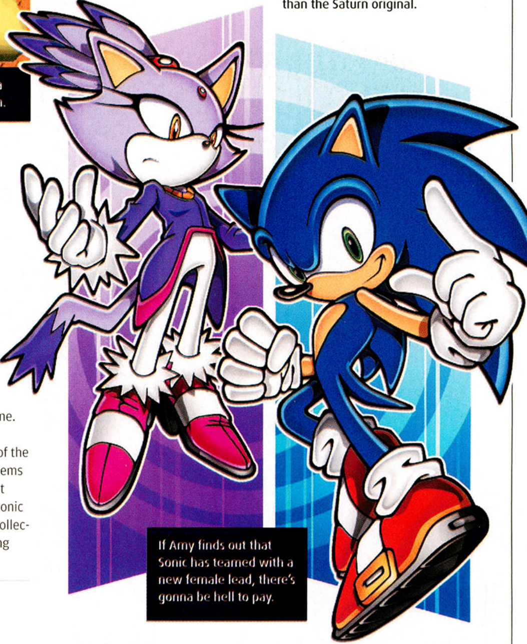
Sonic pulls double duty with his DS debut and the classics compilation fans have been waiting for.

Not content to let Shadow hog the spotlight, Sonic will make his presence felt with two new games of his own in 2005: Sonic Rush for the Nintendo DS and Sonic Gems Collection for the Nintendo GameCube.

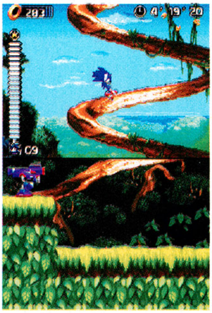
Sonic Rush has no relation to the fully polygonal tech demo shown at last year's E3. Instead, it's a blazingly fast side-scroller that utilizes the system's dual screens to expand the playfield vertically. Dives are steeper, jumps are higher and loops are . . . loopier. Though Sonic himself is a 3-D model (as are many of the game's impressive bosses), the backgrounds are gorgeously hand-drawn with multiple layers of parallax scrolling. An all-new story pairs Sonic with Blaze the Cat (not to be confused with the morbidly obese Big the Cat), a queen from a parallel universe and protector of the Sol Emeralds. Both characters are playable, with separate adventures that intertwine. Sega claims that select gameplay modes will feature touch-screen support, but the demo on display at E3 2005 was limited to the buttons and Control Pad (not that anyone was complaining, mind you).

Sonic Gems Collection is a GCN-exclusive walk down memory lane. Whereas 2002's Sonic Mega Collection brought together all of the hedgehog's Sega Genesis hits, Gems Collection serves up a somewhat more obscure smorgasbord of Sonic goodness. The diamond of the collection is a game that fans have long been clamoring for—Sonic CD, arguably the pinnacle of the entire franchise. Gems also includes the Saturn racing game Sonic R, and the first-ever console release of Sonic The Fighters, a one-on-one brawler originally developed for Sega's Model 2 arcade board. Rounding out the compilation are the Game Gear versions of Sonic Spinball, Sonic the Hedgehog 2, Sonic the Hedgehog Triple Trouble, Sonic Drift 2, Tails' Skypatrol and Tails Adventures. Sega promises a few surprises, as well.
—Steve T.

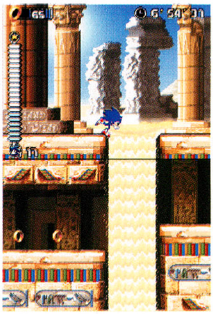
First Gunstar Super Heroes, then a new 2-D Sonic platformer. Sega's on a roll.



If Amy finds out that Sonic has teamed with a new female lead, there's gonna be hell to pay.



Just when you thought things couldn't get any crazier . . .



Still screens don't do it justice. Sonic Rush looks amazing in motion.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA®

Twilight Princess

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

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GAMECUBE.

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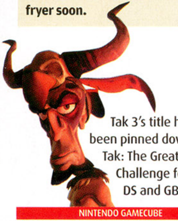
NINTENDO POWER

GAME WATCH FORECAST

How long does it take for an egg to develop fully into a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken? Well, not nearly as long as it takes to make a game. Find out which titles are coming out of the deep fryer soon.



Tak 3's title has been pinned down as Tak: The Great Juju Challenge for GCN, DS and GBA.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Batman Begins	EA	●●●
Battalion Wars	Nintendo	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	Activision	●●○
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2K Games	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Chibi Robo	Nintendo	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	Nintendo	●●○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
Fantastic Four	Activision	●●●
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	Nintendo	●●○
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	Konami	●●○
Geist	Nintendo	●●○
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love	EA	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	Natsume	●●○
Hello Kitty Roller Rescue	Namco	●●○
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	VU Games	●●○
Karaoke Revolution Party	Konami	●●○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
Knights of the Temple	Aspyr	●●●
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
Madagascar	Activision	●●●
Madden NFL 06	EA	●●○
Mario Baseball	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Party 7	Nintendo	●●○
Mark Davis Pro Bass Challenge	Natsume	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●○
Medal of Honor: European Assault	EA	●●●
Mega Man X Collection	Capcom	●●○
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	Midway	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●○
NBA Live 06	EA	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
Nintendo Pennant Chase Baseball	Nintendo	●●○
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece: Grand Battle	Bandai	●●○
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	Nintendo	●●○
Prince of Persia 3*	Ubisoft	●●○
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●○
Shadow the Hedgehog	Sega	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sonic Gems Collection	Sega	●●○
Spartan: Total Warrior	Sega	●●○
Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
SSX on Tour	EA	●●○
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Super Mario Strikers	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 3	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Lockdown	Ubisoft	●●○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
True Crime 2*	Activision	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 3	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Viewtiful Joe VFX Battle	Capcom	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●○○
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	THQ	●●○
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	Activision	●●○
Zatch Bell!	Bandai	●●○

2K Sports will show the GBA and DS some love with its Top Spin series.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Atomic Betty	Namco	●●○
Backyard Football 2006	Atari	●○○
Backyard Skateboarding 2006	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Batman Begins	EA	●●●
Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Namco	●●○
The Bible Game	Crave	●○○
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●○
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2K Games	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
CT Special Forces 3: Bioterror	Hip Games	●●○
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Disney's Cinderella: Magical Dreams	Disney	●●○
Disney's Herbie: Fully Loaded	Disney	●●●
Disney's Kim Possible 3: Team Possible	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire 3	Disney	●●○
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	Capcom	●●●
Disney's That's So Raven 2	Disney	●●○
Disney's The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
DK: King of Swing	Nintendo	●●○
Donkey Kong Country 3	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	Atari	●●○
Duel Masters 3*	Atari	●●○
Dynasty Warriors Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
everGirl*	THQ	●○○
The Fairly OddParents!*	THQ	●●○
Fantastic Four	Activision	●●●
Gumby vs. The Astrobots	Namco	●●○
Gunstar Super Heroes	Sega	●●○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	Natsume	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	Orbital	●●○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
Lego Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●○
Madagascar	Activision	●●●
Madden NFL 06	EA	●●○
Mario Tennis Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Anniv. Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Protoman/Team Colonel	Capcom	●●●
Mega Man Zero 4	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●○○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Payback	Destination	●○○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Power Rangers*	THQ	●○○
RebelStar: Tactical Command	Namco	●●○
Riviera: The Promised Land	Atlus	●●●
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●○
Screw Breaker	Nintendo	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	Konami	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●○○
Sigma Star Saga	Namco	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Tim Burton's the Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	Disney	●●○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 3	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Arcade Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
W.I.T.C.H.*	Disney	●○○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	Nintendo	●●○
Zooo	Ignition	●●○

Atlus's SBK: Snowboard Kids DS has slid a bit—it'll be hitting the slopes in November.

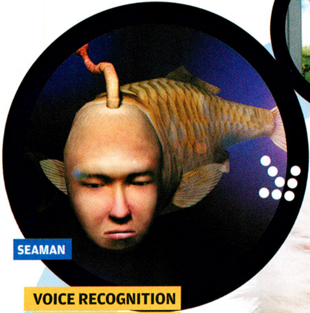
NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	Nintendo	●●○
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●○
Animal Crossing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
ATV Quad Fury 2	Majesco	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●○
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Bomberman	Ubisoft	●●●
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●○○
Bust-a-Move DS	Majesco	●●○
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	Konami	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●○○
Disney/Pixar's Finding Nemo*	THQ	●○○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●○○
Disney's Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven*	Disney	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors	Atari	●●○
Dragon Booster	Konami	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●○○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Electroplankton	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●○○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	Konami	●●○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●○
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA	●●○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon DS*	Natsume	●●○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●○○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Kirby: Canvas Curse	Nintendo	●●●
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
Lost in Blue	Konami	●●○
Lunar: Dragon Song	Ubisoft	●●○
Madagascar	Activision	●●●
Madden NFL 06	EA	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario & Luigi 2	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Kart DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team	Capcom	●●○
Meteos	Nintendo	●●●
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Metroid Prime Pinball	Nintendo	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
Nanostray	Majesco	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
New Super Mario Bros.*	Nintendo	●●○
Nintendogs	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Pac 'n Roll	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●○○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	Capcom	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubisoft	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	Namco	●●○
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●○○
Secret of Mana*	Square Enix	●○○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●○○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Sonic Rush	Sega	●●○
Space Invaders Revolution	Mastiff	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	●●○
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	VU Games	●●○
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	Majesco	●●○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	Ubisoft	●●●
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Touch Golf DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Trace Memory	Nintendo	●●○
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Viewtiful Joe DS	Capcom	●●○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	Konami	●●○
Zoo Tycoon DS	THQ	●●○

*Tentative title

CHEW ON THIS

Before Nintendogs causes DS dog owners to puddle this summer, we wanted to get you thinking about its influences.



SEAMAN

VOICE RECOGNITION

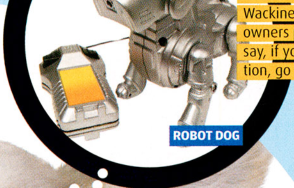
Everybody talks nowadays, but who's really listening? A fish with a human face, that's who!

HEY YOU, PIKACHU!

GERBIL

This box contains one genuine pedigreed
PET ROCK

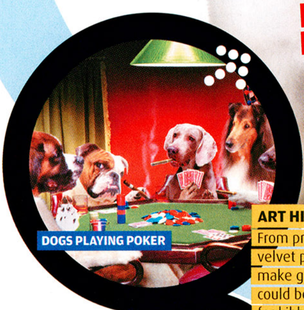
PET ROCK



ROBOT DOG

UNUSUAL PETS

Wackiness prevails when owners pick their pets. We say, if you make a connection, go for it.

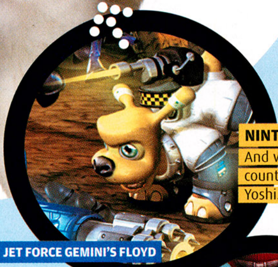


DOGS PLAYING POKER

ART HISTORY

From priceless works to velvet paintings, dogs make great art subjects. It could be 'cause they work for kibble.

ANUBIS

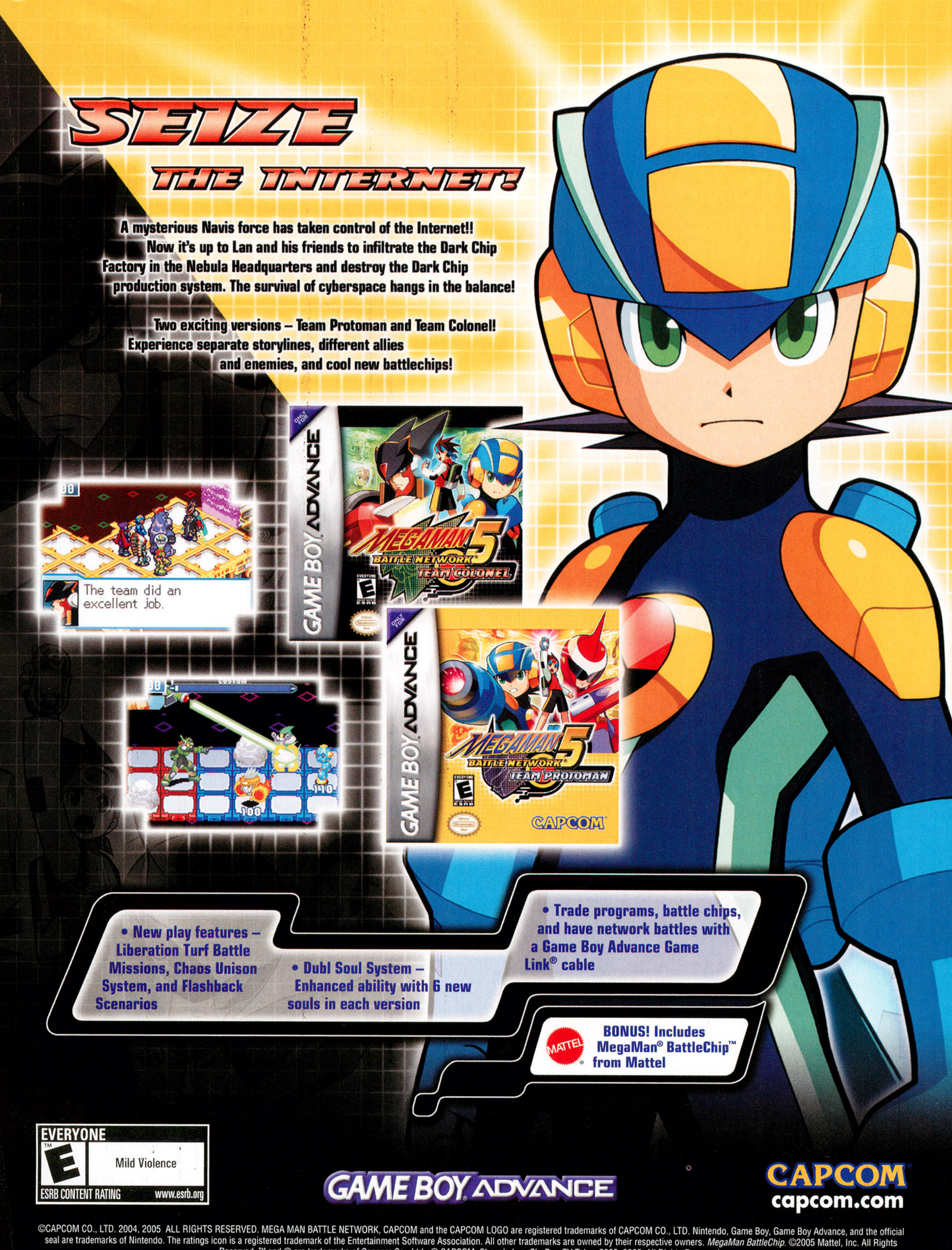


JET FORCE GEMINI'S FLOYD

NINTENDO DOGS

And we're not even counting doglike dino Yoshi.

STAR FOX'S GENERAL PEPPER


SEIZE
THE INTERNET!
GAME BOY ADVANCE
MEGAMAN 5 BATTLE NETWORK TEAM COLONEL
MEGAMAN 5 BATTLE NETWORK TEAM PROTOMAN
CAPCOM
EVERYONE
CUSTOM
MATTEL

A mysterious Navis force has taken control of the Internet!! Now it's up to Lan and his friends to infiltrate the Dark Chip Factory in the Nebula Headquarters and destroy the Dark Chip production system. The survival of cyberspace hangs in the balance!

Two exciting versions – Team Protoman and Team Colonel! Experience separate storylines, different allies and enemies, and cool new battlechips!

The team did an excellent job.

- New play features – Liberation Turf Battle Missions, Chaos Unison System, and Flashback Scenarios
- Dubl Soul System – Enhanced ability with 6 new souls in each version
- Trade programs, battle chips, and have network battles with a Game Boy Advance Game Link® cable

BONUS! Includes MegaMan® BattleChip™ from Mattel

EVERYONE
E
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

GAME BOY ADVANCE

CAPCOM
capcom.com

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The Empires Strike Back

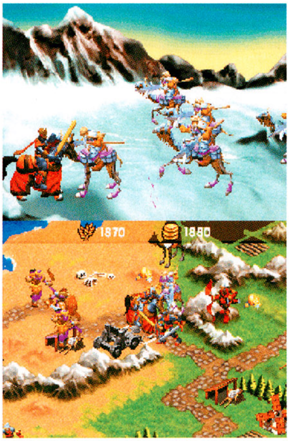
>AGE OF EMPIRES: THE AGE OF KINGS

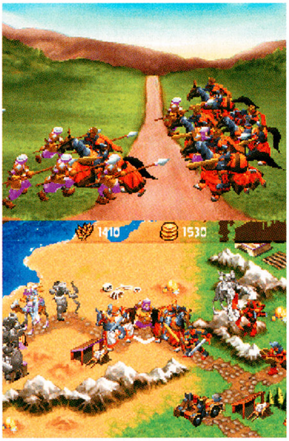
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ECLIPSE • RELEASE: WINTER 2005

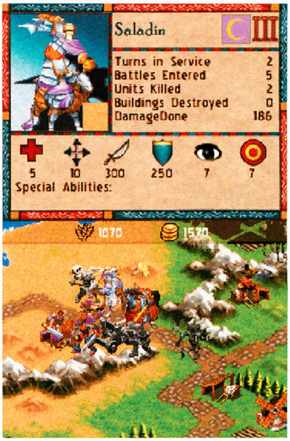
Setting the standard for real-time strategy games on the PC, the core titles in the Age of Empires franchise have seen a handful of reincarnations, mostly consisting of expansion sets that are only slight improvements to the originals. What excites us about Age of Empires: The Age of Kings for the Nintendo DS is that developer Digital Eclipse has taken a new approach to the best-selling series: the all-new Nintendo DS game will be turn-based rather than real-time.

The setting is familiar to fans of the series. Players command one of five civilizations as they advance from the Dark Ages to the Middle Ages in a campaign to conquer the known world. The new game gives tacticians control of over 45 different unit types to take into battle. Hero units such as Richard the Lionheart, Robin Hood, Joan of Arc and Genghis Khan are among the options, and their special abilities will affect the entire battlefield. Players can construct buildings, learn new skills and research a wide variety of technologies that will help advance civilization into the next age. You can access an all-new Combat Advisor for advice on campaign strategies and an assessment of possible battle outcomes. The game also includes a multiplayer feature that allows up to four players to lead their civilizations into battle wirelessly.

DS is primed to be the ideal platform for role-playing and strategy games, and Majesco promises that Age of Empires: The Age of Kings will take full advantage of the hardware's unique functionality.
—ANDY M.

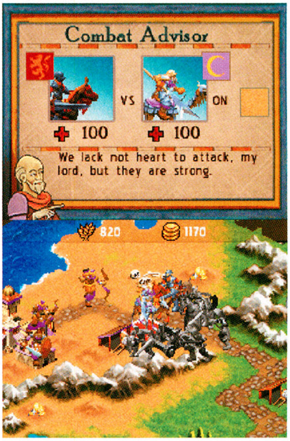





Saladin

Turns in Service 2
Battles Entered 5
Units Killed 2
Buildings Destroyed 0
DamageDone 186

5 10 300 250 7 7
Special Abilities:


Combat Advisor

VS ON

100 100

We lack not heart to attack, my lord, but they are strong.

New to the Age of Empires series, the Combat Advisor will help you assess whether or not a battle may go your way.

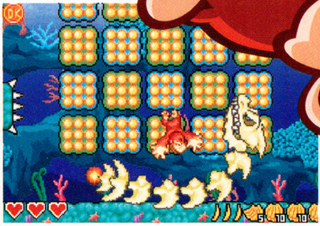
So many civilizations to crush, so little time.

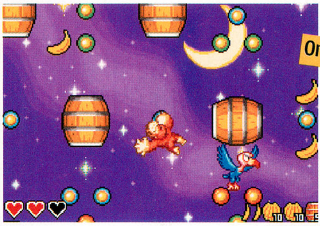
Monkey Wrench

>DK: KING OF SWING

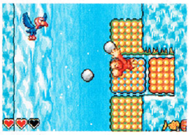
PLATFORM: **GBA** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **PAON** • RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 19, 2005**

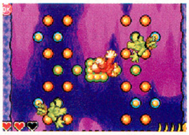
No jumping, no thumbs. In DK: King of Swing, you'll travel the usual environs, but in an outlandish way. You'll use the GBA's L and R Buttons 99.9% of the time to control the ape, and not just to run left and right on platforms. The real L-and-R story revolves around swinging. By clutching pivot points with DK's left (L Button) or right (R Button) hand, you'll cause the ape to spin around the post. When you release your grip, you'll send DK flying on a trajectory—fighting gravity and nearby enemies—to come within reach of other pivot points. The pivot gameplay is mostly brawny (you can nail foes by grabbing and throwing rocks with a free hand, or using both hands to slingshot off two points into a lunge attack), and a little brainy, since some points act as puzzle-solving levers. Fun, crazy stuff, and it just might outmuscle even DK's bongo romp for pure innovation. —STEVEN G.





Once again, the GBA gives the finger to anyone who dares say that it's being left behind by GCN and DS innovation. Two fingers, actually.



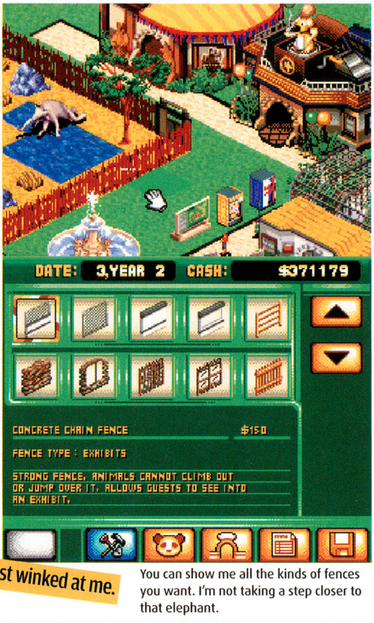


Don't Pet the Tigers

>ZOO TYCOON

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **ALTRON** • RELEASE: **FALL 2005**

I live near Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo, and at night I can sometimes hear the animals roar. It scares the heck out of me. I usually dive under my bed covers until they stop. So when Zoo Tycoon comes out this fall, you won't see *me* picking up a copy. No way. From the little we've heard from THQ so far, the experience is just like being at the zoo—a host of animals, including elephants, tigers and crocodiles, will roam, wrestle and stare at babies through steel bars. And to keep the visitors happy, I'd be responsible for keeping the animal environments clean, as well as for setting up hamburger joints and gift shops. They say you'll touch the screen to interact with the wildlife. Unless I can create a zoo entirely of cute penguins and koala bears, they can forget it. Go ahead and call me a wuss, but I'll leave this level of realism to the lion-cage cleaners and polar-bear feeders. —CHRIS S.



DATE: 3,YEAR 2 CASH: $371179

CONCRETE CHAIN FENCE $150

FENCE TYPE : EXHIBITS

STRONG FENCE, ANIMALS CANNOT CLIMB OUT OR JUMP OVER IT. ALLOWS GUESTS TO SEE INTO AN EXHIBIT.

I think that gorilla just winked at me.

DATE: 3,YEAR 2 CASH: $360589

DATE: 3,YEAR 2 CASH: $368959

You can show me all the kinds of fences you want. I'm not taking a step closer to that elephant.

Smash Hits

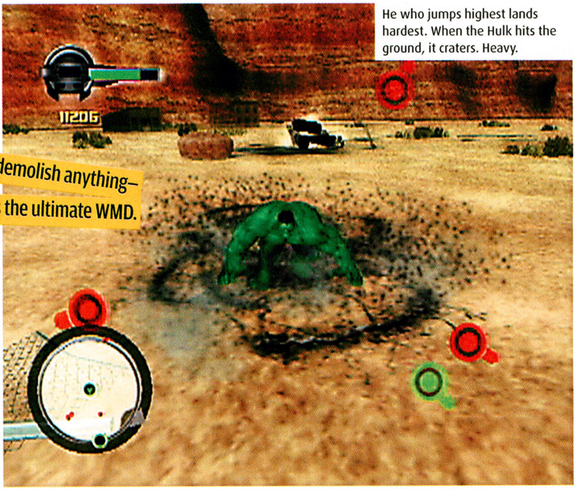
>THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: VU GAMES
DEVELOPER: RADICAL • RELEASE: AUGUST 2005

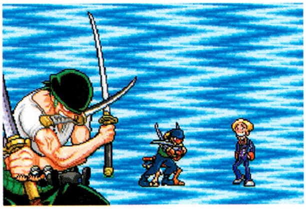
How satisfying is it to run through a tanker truck, leaving a burning wreck in your wake? Or to rip a car in half and use the pieces as steel fists? Or to jump over a building and land so hard you create a hole in the pavement? As Marvel's massive ticking time bomb of a superhero, the Hulk, you'll find out. The game's two huge environments, a city and a canyon, are your demolition playgrounds in which you can smash through anything in your path, turning objects into weapons and enemies into pâte. The Hulk is not to be trifled with. He has no qualms with grabbing a soldier, crushing the puny human and tossing the body at the next soldier that crosses his path.

The story, crafted by well-known comic-book scribe Paul Jenkins, has Bruce Banner attempting to gain control over the Hulk's destructive powers, risking a permanent separation from his alter ego that would set the beast loose on the world. With 30 story missions, 40 challenge missions, six epic boss battles and a roam-and-destroy sensibility, Ultimate Destruction is a power-up- and bonus-packed crowd-pleaser. —GEORGE S.

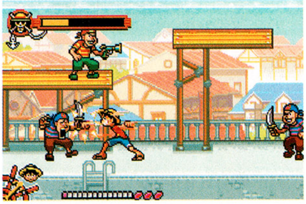
Go anywhere, demolish anything—The Hulk is the ultimate WMD.

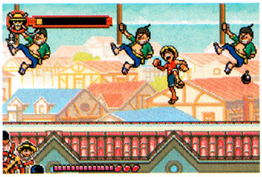


He who jumps highest lands hardest. When the Hulk hits the ground, it craters. Heavy.

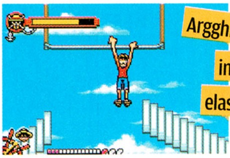


Show some respect, or I'll tell my father!

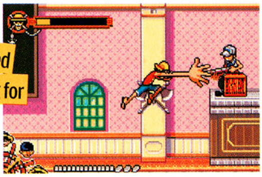




Monkey D. Luffy's stretchy arms and legs allow him to perform an array of strange attacks known as Gum Gum abilities.



Argghh! I've traded in my peg leg for elastic arms.



Visualize World Piece

>ONE PIECE

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: DIMPS • RELEASE: FALL 2005

Pirates and platformers come together in Shonen Jump's One Piece, a GBA-exclusive title based on the offbeat Japanese anime that recently premiered on Cartoon Network. Quite a few One Piece games have been developed and released in Japan—this is the first to appear in North America. The anime features a band of quirky pirates known as the Straw Hat crew in search of One Piece, a treasure hidden long ago by an infamous pirate. In the game, you'll follow the adventures of Monkey D. Luffy as he searches the East Blue Sea for the treasure, fighting familiar enemies along the way. The gameplay is pretty straightforward platforming—sublevels, power-ups, minibosses and final bosses appear on every level. One Piece's more unique feature is Luffy's ability to summon his shipmates to join the fight and perform special attacks. In addition, a handful of customizable minigames can be unlocked throughout the game. —ANDY M.

Puppet Power

>ZATCH BELL!

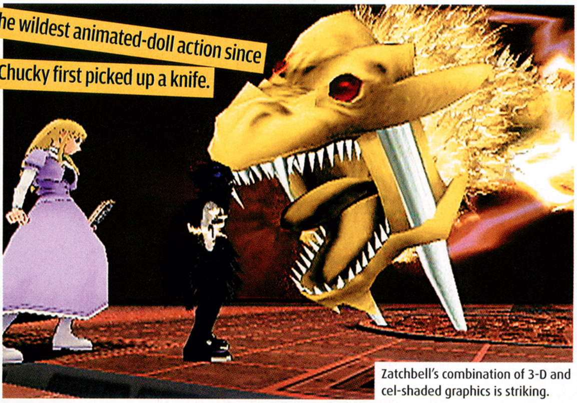
PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: EIGHTING • RELEASE: AUGUST 2005

Creepy, colorful imagery, an off-beat premise involving puppetlike aliens, and 3-D rendered effects in a cel-shaded world make Zatchbell! a notable one-on-one battler. Each waist-high Mamado has a human companion with whom it works to trigger transformations and unleash spells. You control the Mamado directly, executing combinations with the human helper and sometimes taking on an otherworldly form.

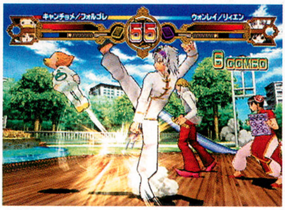
Based on the Japanese-import cartoon show, the game takes place in 18 locations, features a selection of characters from the first season and includes voice work from the North American cast. Additional characters appear on the scene after your in-game heroics earn you trading cards.

Although the premise of eerily cute aliens coming to Earth for a once-in-a-millennium free-for-all is odd, even by anime standards, the game is shaping up to be a solid, intuitive pick-up-and-play fighting title that even those not tuned in to the TV series will want to watch for. —GEORGE S.

The wildest animated-doll action since Chucky first picked up a knife.



Zatchbell's combination of 3-D and cel-shaded graphics is striking.



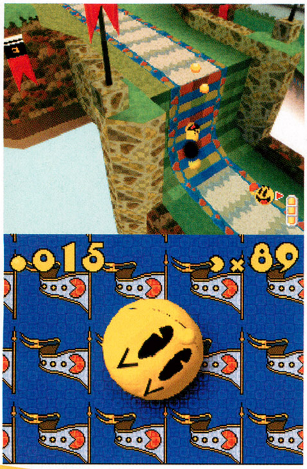
ティオ/恵
54
ブラゴ/シェリー

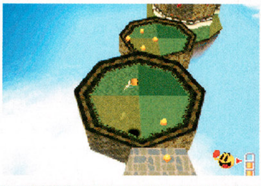
Fruit Roll-up

>PAC 'N ROLL

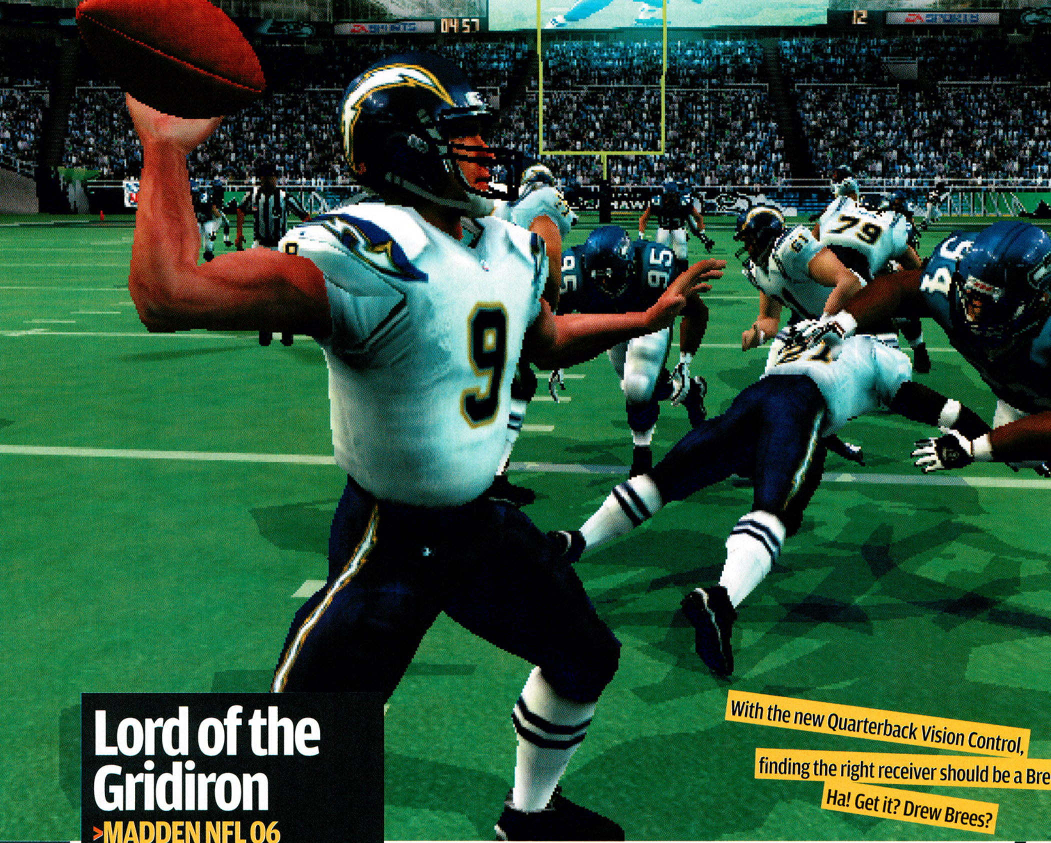
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NAMCO
DEVELOPER: NAMCO • RELEASE: SUMMER 2005

Go ahead and make all the Marble Madness comments you want—we'll wait. Okay, now that that's over, get that game out of your head. Pac 'n Roll delivers a game experience that would be totally unfair to compare with previous titles. For example, touch-screen movement allows you to maneuver Pac-Man with unprecedented control. Drag the stylus over the hero to send him off in a direction—the faster you draw, the faster he moves. If Pac-Man gets close to danger, just tap on him to make him stop in his yellow tracks. The controls are intuitive—after a few seconds of play, your hands take over and Pac-Man goes wherever you feel like having him go. Pickups include the Feather Hat and armor, which change Pac-Man's speed and stopping ability, as well as bestows him with the ability to fly or roll underwater temporarily, respectively. And just out of Pac-love, Namco is also including the original arcade Pac-Man on the game card. Score. —CHRIS S.





He's round, he's yellow, and he's rolling your way. As long you aren't a ghost, you should be all right.



With the new Quarterback Vision Control, finding the right receiver should be a Bre

Ha! Get it? Drew Brees?

Lord of the Gridiron

>MADDEN NFL 06

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA TIBURON • RELEASE: AUGUST 2005

Those who feared the Madden team would rest on their laurels after EA secured the exclusive NFL license can breathe a sigh of relief. This season's edition of the storied franchise looks to be the most ambitious update we've seen in years. The most significant gameplay addition is what EA calls Quarterback Vision Control. When your QB drops back in the pocket, a portion of the field is highlighted to represent his field of vision. You can adjust where he's looking with the C Stick, and if the intended receiver isn't within the field of vision when you throw to him, the pass won't be as accurate. This makes the passing game much more realistic, and should provide a better balance between the ground and air attacks.

The developers are also introducing an all-new play mode. In NFL Superstar, you'll experience the life of a player both on and off the field. You'll hire an agent, determine your training regimen, give interviews after the game and ultimately adopt one of more than 60 personas. Will you be the hard-working, straitlaced MVP à la Jerry Rice, or follow in the footsteps of Brian Bosworth and head to Hollywood? —STEVE T.

OVER DRIVE!
4 Attacking Hits!
MAGIC
OVER DRIVE!
2 Attacking Hits!
?????
ATTACK
Ledah

A thousand years have passed since Ragnarok, when the gods of Asgard sacrificed their power to seal demons away with Grim Angels. The demons' power is stirring, and the Seven Magi have no choice but to actuate the Retribution--a cataclysmic event that spells the end for Riviera. Two angels descend on Riviera, Diviners in hand... unaware of the darkness to follow if they succeed...

Riviera should be just beyond Heaven's Gate.

Branching paths of adventure lead to multiple endings!

Unique item system changes the item's properties depending on the user!

A beautiful fantasy world drawn in lush detail!

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THE PROMISED LAND

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Use of Drugs
Sexual Themes
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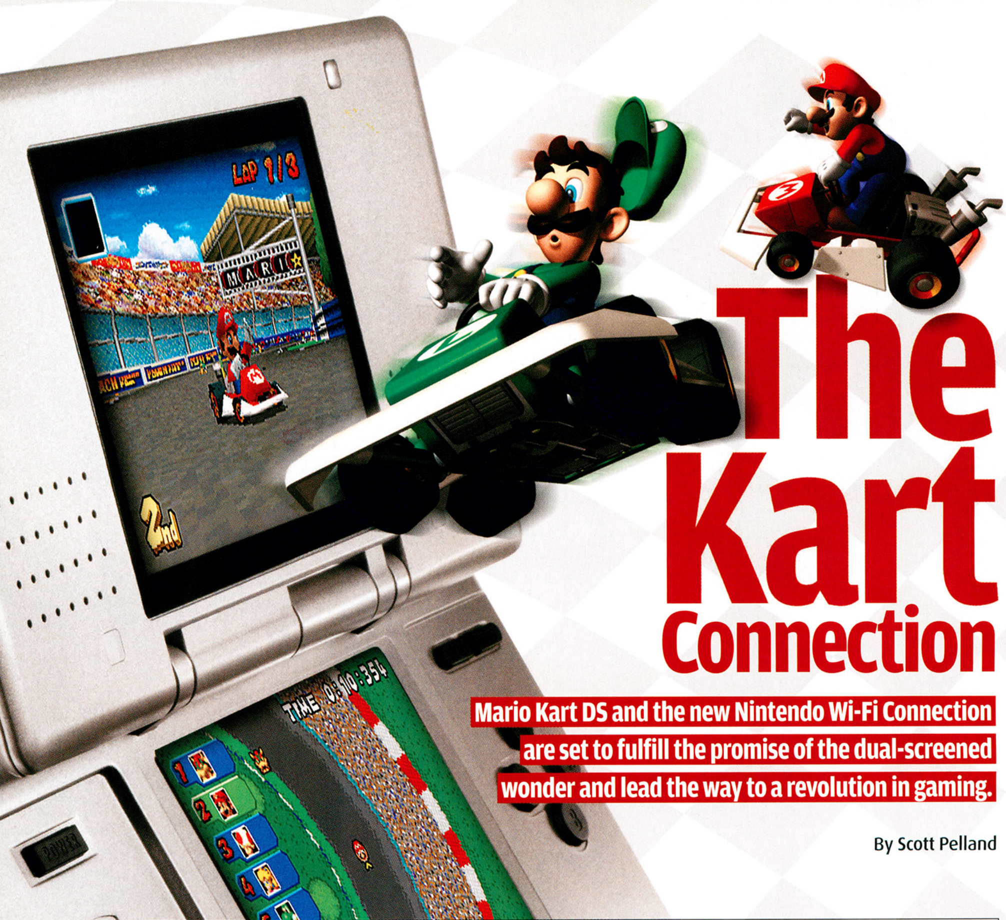


The Kart Connection

Mario Kart DS and the new Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection are set to fulfill the promise of the dual-screened wonder and lead the way to a revolution in gaming.

By Scott Pelland

Driving DS

We all know that touching is good. We've enjoyed the benefits of dual screens. We've even seen that blowing into the Nintendo DS microphone is a great way to affect gameplay. But what of Wi-Fi and the tantalizing idea of playing games against people anywhere in the world? It turns out that the promised land of Nintendo DS connective gameplay is not far away—Mario Kart DS is ready to take you there. The journey will be made possible by the introduction of the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection—a free service that will allow DS owners to hook up wirelessly wherever there is Wi-Fi access. It's the final piece of the DS puzzle, and it's scheduled to fall into place this holiday season.

IWATA'S Road Map

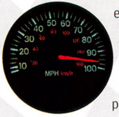
At E3, Nintendo's dynamic president, Satoru Iwata, described his vision of a Wi-Fi-connected gaming community, where interacting with other gamers will be as simple as pulling up a chair in the living room; where casual gamers won't be slaughtered by predatory pros the moment they step into the fray; where friends will be able to hook up and play with each other no matter where they are; where nobody will have to shell out monthly subscription fees for Nintendo-published titles; and where everyone will find gamers at their own level, even if their friends are DS-lacking dweebs. It's a vision that is in sharp contrast to what Nintendo's competitors have fielded for their home consoles. In studying existing subscriber services, Iwata and the Nintendo brain trust have seen that only a relatively small number of hard-core gamers inhabit online spaces—only a million or two out of tens of millions of console owners. Something is keeping the masses away. The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection addresses the technical and environmental impediments, but what of gameplay? Clearly it will take a special game experience to capture the imaginations of the reluctant masses and bring them together.

All the Road RAGE

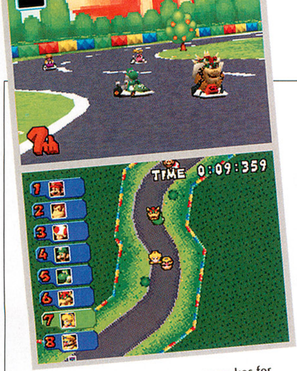
If you've ever felt the thrill of launching a Koopa shell from the back of the pack to decimate an unsuspecting karter on the road ahead, you know what makes the Mario Kart franchise so special. It's all about the interplay of emotions between drivers: like the madcap courses themselves, every race is filled with emotional ups, downs, twists, turns and dozens of small victories and defeats. Though the AI of the Kart games is really very good, the emotional roller-coaster ride is made possible by the unpredictability of human opponents.

Clearly it will take a special game experience to capture the imaginations of the reluctant masses and bring them together.

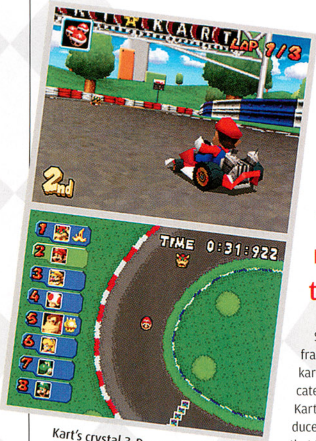
Since the debut of Super Mario Kart for the Super NES, the franchise has met with phenomenal success—so much so that kart games have become a full-fledged subgenre of the racing category. From the beginning, the standout feature of Mario Kart has been the multiplayer aspect. Super Mario Kart introduced two-player head-to-head races, Mario Kart 64 doubled that to four players, and (with a LAN connection) Mario Kart: Double Dash!! for Nintendo GameCube allowed eight racers to join in the fun. Introducing items that upset the balance of the race (so driving skill alone wouldn't net you a trophy) was probably the most critical innovation in the franchise from a multiplayer perspective, because the use of items gave every racer a chance to influence the outcome. Let's face it; in the gaming world, stabbing your buddy in the back is fun. Other innovations included the power-slide and, most recently, the cooperative component of Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, which added a second level of multiplayer interaction and communication to the mix. Easy-to-learn, fun-to-play, highly interactive Mario Kart games are the embodiment of Iwata's vision of what makes a great multiplayer gaming experience. But the problem with this perfect picture is that you don't always have three buddies in your living room revving their kart engines. When you combine Mario Kart DS with the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, however, a killer ap is born.



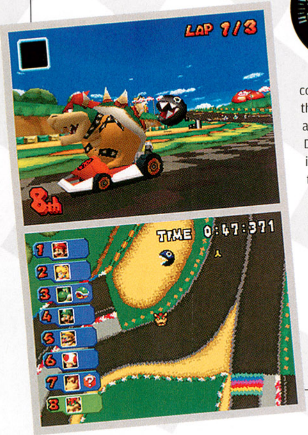
A killer app is born



The crowded field of eight racers makes for even more chaos and reversals of fortune than in previous Kart games.



Kart's crystal 3-D graphics don't slow down even when connecting with seven competing racers.



Familiar courses and hazards, like Chain Chomps, preserve the pure essence of Mario Kart.

Konno, The Kartman

Hideki Konno

Mario Kart producer Hideki Konno, is Nintendo's man behind the kart. In fact, he's been working on Mario Kart games from the very first one. NP's George Sinfield caught up with the game's producer at E3 to score the following interview.

NP: How do you define the Mario Kart series and its place in the racing genre?

HK: When Mario Kart was first developed, our focus was on how the player can have fun and have fun playing with other people. Not just about the race. Not just about [placing] first, second or third. Of course, that is important, but it was more the focus of how people could interact with each other and have a good time doing it.

NP: Playing against friends in the same room is different from playing over a network. What makes playing against other humans on a network more fun than playing against AI-controlled opponents?

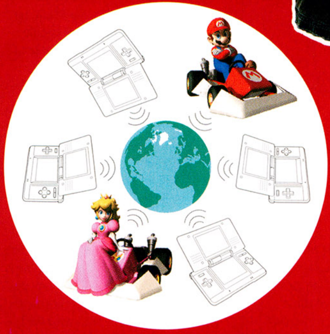
HK: The development teams work very hard on the AI, to make the [computer-driven karts] humanlike. To give them all personalities. But the fun of playing with another person is that everyone is very different. They have different personalities. They have different strategies. They have different ways of playing. So we think it's always going to be more fun playing against another person. With the Super NES, there could be two players, GameCube four, now it's eight. But we realize that it's going to be hard to get eight people in the same room. We're using the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to extend that out. Make it possible for people to play against their friends across the country, or try someone out who is at about the same level as they are. It's about the person-to-person play, the human-to-human connection.

NP: How did you arrive at the right functionality for the top and bottom screens?

HK: Kart is very simple. The way that we decided to lay it out was to have the game screen on the top and the [navigation] screen on bottom. The player can adjust [the bottom screen] so that it shows the entire race course or a slightly zoomed-in portion of the map.

Welcome to Wi-Fi

You hear about Wi-Fi all the time. It's at airports, in hotel lobbies, at every Starbucks on every corner of every town on the planet. But you can't see it, hear it, feel it or drink it. So what is Wi-Fi? Simply put, it's a technology that enables wireless-enabled devices such as the DS to communicate with each other over a short range of roughly 100 feet. If you connect a Wi-Fi-enabled base station to a broadband Internet connection in your home, Wi-Fi-enabled devices within range can communicate with the base station and share the Internet connection. It's this connection to an Internet access point that allows global reach for users. It's kind of like a cordless phone. The phone's base unit is connected to the telephone line, and the handset connects with the base unit wirelessly as long as you're within range, allowing you to call anywhere in the world from anywhere in your house so you can taunt your friends about how you're such a better a karter than they are. Sweet.



So that explains Wi-Fi access at home. Public hotspots work in a similar way. A base unit in a public place, like a coffee shop, library or hotel lobby, will allow broadband Internet access to Wi-Fi-enabled devices. Sometimes you have to pay for the privilege of connecting, but a growing number of locations offer free Wi-Fi access.

Voulez-vouz jouer?

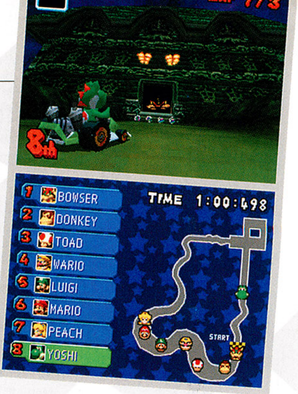
Once you have access to a hotspot, you need an Internet destination to connect you to other DS players. The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection service is being offered in partnership with IGN. IGN's GameSpy architecture and navigation technology will allow DS players to connect wirelessly with any Wi-Fi base unit, hook up with a selected group of friends or choose to play with strangers matched by their skill level. Extra services may include the ability to store game data online or to post high scores. That's the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection in a nutshell. We'll have more announcements and info to get you hooked up down the road.

Wheel FUN

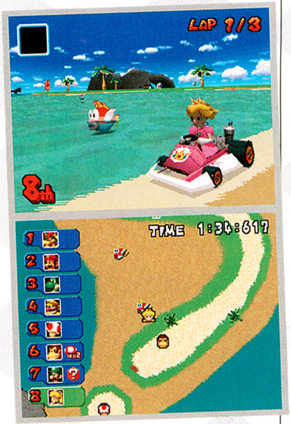
We got our hot little hands on the real deal at E3, where our fellow kart fanatics crowded into the Nintendo booth to compete on one of eight demo stations and to earn special kart prizes. The first thing you should know is that Mario Kart DS doesn't mess with success. The Kartesian essentials are all in place, including the drivers and items found in previous Mario Kart games. (See the Under the Hood section for further details.) Power-sliding and power-boosting techniques are also included, and we saw familiar elements like Lakitu, who fishes you out of trouble when you run off the track, not that we would ever do that. The game's 3-D graphics cruise smoothly, even with eight drivers screaming around the course. Off the line, light karts darted ahead while heavier machines slowly built momentum, but those quick little karts also were easy to knock off the course. No battle modes were shown in the E3 demo, but we expect both single- (that's a first) and multiplayer battles in the final game. Touch control was limited to switching between the two bottom-screen perspectives, one displaying the course map and the other zooming into a detailed overhead view. There's more to come, of course, but our initial impression is very positive. The game is pure Mario Kart, with beautiful, bright graphics and chaotic melee racing action.

UNDER THE HOOD AT E3

- Retro courses re-create tracks from previous Mario Kart games in 3-D
- Four-player Wi-Fi racing action and eight-player local wireless racing
- Top screen shows main racing perspective
- Two bottom-screen views, one overall course view and one zoomed-in view showing greater detail
- Power-slide boosts
- Items include mushrooms, green shells, red shells, blue spiked shells, lightning bolts and banana peels
- Characters include Mario, Luigi, Peach, Yoshi, Toad, Donkey Kong, Wario and Bowser
- Eight courses on display, including Nitro Cup courses (Figure-Eight Circuit, Yoshi Falls, Cheep Cheep Beach, Luigi's Mansion) and Retro Cup tracks (SNES Mario Circuit, N64 Moo Moo Farm, GBA Peach Circuit, GCN Luigi Circuit), with more than 30 courses in the final game.

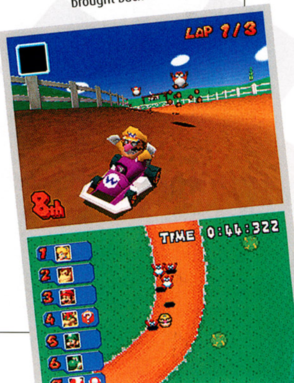


The course map in the bottom screen shows how much distance Yoshi has to make up.



The zoomed-in view in the bottom screen will help karters plot cunning shortcuts.

Moo Moo Farm and other classic Kart courses in the E3 demo brought back fond memories.



Wi-Fi Games Under CONSTRUCTION

Mario Kart DS isn't the only game revving its Wi-Fi DS engine; 25 companies are developing Wi-Fi-compatible titles. Nintendo's Animal Crossing DS and Tony Hawk from Activision will join Mario Kart DS at the starting line. All those TBAs in the list have yet to be announced.

Publisher	DS Wi-Fi Game
Activision	Tony Hawk*
Atari	TBA
Bandai	Mobile Suit Gundam*
	Digimon World*
Banpresto	TBA
Buena Vista	TBA
Capcom	TBA
EA	TBA
FromSoftware	Tenchu DS*
Hudson Soft	Bomberman*
	Momotaro Dentetsu World*
Koei	Dynasty Warriors DS*
Konami	KOJIMA Productions Products
	World Soccer: Winning Eleven series
	Jikkyo Powerful Proyakyu series
	Castlevania series
Majesco	TBA
Marvelous Interactive	Bokujou-Monogatari series*
	Rune Factory*
	Contact*
	A real-time strategy game*
Mastiff	TBA
Namco	A new RPG*
Nintendo	Animal Crossing DS
	Mario Kart DS
	Many more titles in development
Sega	TBA
Spike	Professional Wrestling*
Square Enix	Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*
Taito	TBA
Take 2	TBA
Telegames	TBA
THQ	TBA
Ubisoft	TBA
Vivendi	TBA

* working title

25 Companies are developing Wi-Fi-compatible titles for Nintendo DS, and more than five million gamers are playing DS right now.

The Starting LINE

LAP 1/3
5th
TIME 0:02:122
NINTENDO DS

The wait for Wi-Fi is nearly over. And if you're wondering if it has been worth the wait, consider this: In a few months, you'll enter a café in your home town, plop down with a cup of joe, fire up your DS and challenge a group of friends across town or strangers scattered across the globe to a friendly Mario Kart DS race. Maybe you'll even connect to someone at NP. Over five million people are already playing on the DS, and the number grows daily. No one will blow you away and no one will charge you a fee to race. It will be Kart heaven.

LAP 1/3
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Together, Mario Kart DS and the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection mark the beginning of a bold experiment in the gaming world, a test case for Mr. Iwata's vision of wireless, Wi-Fi-connected gaming—a vision that includes the Revolution as well as the Nintendo DS. And beyond Mario Kart DS is a crowded field of games that will introduce concepts and styles of wireless gameplay that will help further set the course for Nintendo DS and Revolution games. We may be biased kart freaks who work at Nintendo, but we think that's a vision worth waiting for.

I LOVE³ LA

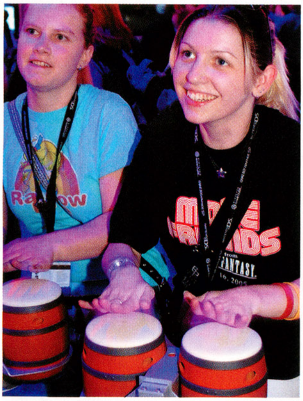
All things bright (Game Boy Micro) and beautiful (Twilight Princess) appeared at **E3 2005.** Learn how we went to LA and didn't get a tan.

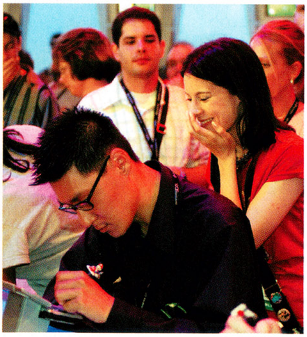
By George Sinfield

Photos by Robin Layton

FIRE EMBLEM

Loud, crowded and out of control, E3 is the only event during which you can wait in line for hours to get Stan Lee's autograph and still be cool. It's the only place where an eardrum-thrashing rock band flanked by flame jugglers and contortionists can go unnoticed. It's the only reason to go to Southern California and never see the sun. But we did bask in the glow of details about the console that will be nothing short of a Revolution, a fashion statement from the GBA, the emergence of the DS and Nintendo-vation around every corner.
Our E3 shined brightly.





From the moment the show started, Nintendo's booth was abuzz with activity. Attendees who sampled Mario Kart DS received a special oversized Kart stylus.

FuturePerfect

NINTENDO REVEALS A NEW CONSOLE AND A HANDHELD REIMAGINED

Say You Want a Revolution

It's no coincidence that the code name for the next Nintendo console, revealed in prototype form at Nintendo's E3 media briefing, is Revolution. More so than it's competitors, the company is set on changing the way that people see and interact with games.

Executive VP of Sales and Marketing Reggie Fils-Aime began the event by calling Nintendo a content company, and the announcements that Nintendo executives followed with underlined Nintendo's commitment to creating and encouraging the development of new gaming experiences.

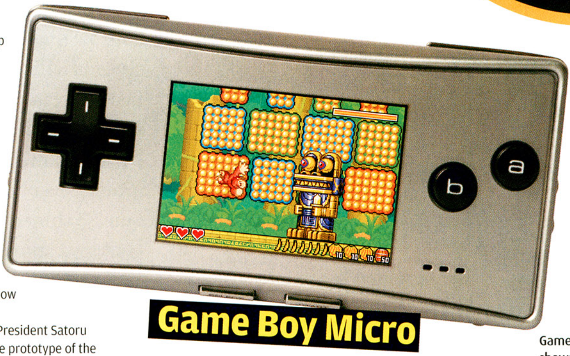
In addition to revealing details about the Wi-Fi plans for Nintendo DS (see page 36), which will give new accessibility and portability to online gaming, representatives introduced upcoming software, specifics for the Revolution and the Game Boy Micro, which you read about first in last month's NP. The gasp and applause from the members of the gaming press in attendance when Fils-Aime pulled the Micro out of his inside jacket pocket—as he did with the DS last year—was exhilarating. The exhilaration would continue the next day when players shared Game Boy Micro time with demonstrators on the show floor (below right).

By the time Nintendo President Satoru Iwata showed up with the prototype of the Revolution, the crowd was in a full-on frenzy. Introducing the system as "By far the smallest console we've ever manufactured," Iwata showed several potential colors for its casing (shown below) and told magazine and online writers, "These are the colors that we are thinking of. Maybe you and your readers will let us know what you think."

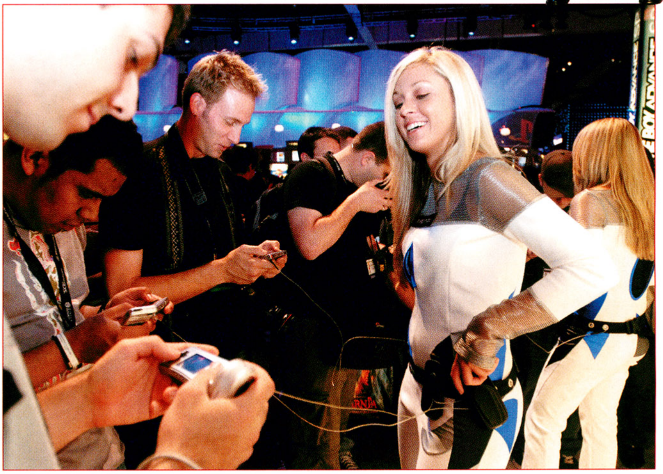
In addition to the details that we shared with you last month, Iwata mentioned that Shigeru Miyamoto and company are working on a brand-new franchise for the system, and that games from established franchises—Zelda, Mario, Metroid Prime and Iwata's own Smash Bros.—are on the way.

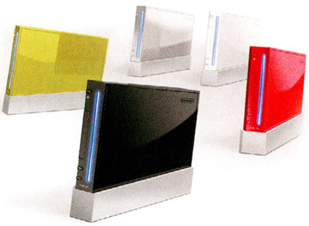
> ***"There is no mystery to the development of our core technology," said Nintendo President Satoru Iwata while holding up the prototype Revolution. "When you turn it on and see the graphics, you will say Wow!"***

Revolution



Game Boy Micro is shown actual size. Reggie Fils-Aime is not.





TheShowstopper

NOTHING EVEN CAME CLOSE TO ZELDA MANIA

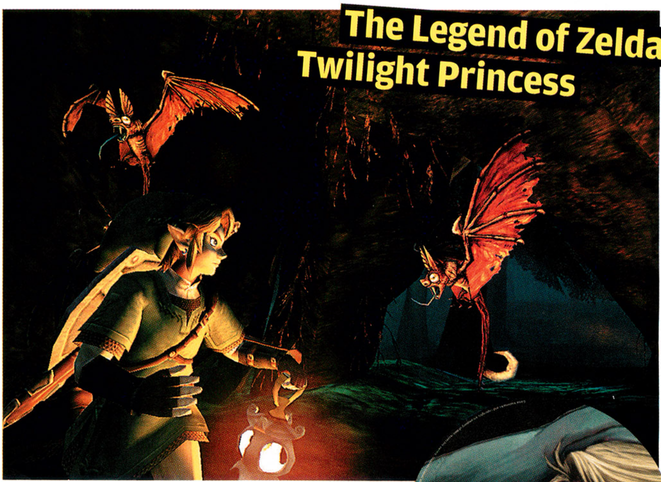
The Buzz Began Before E3

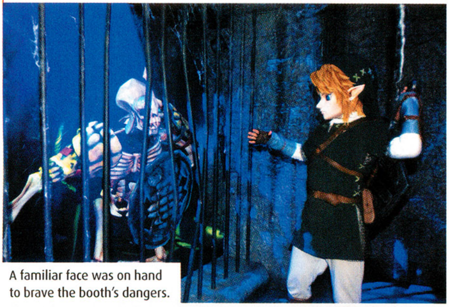
The response to the Zelda trailer at last year's media briefing is legendary. Longtime fans of the series wept at the sight of their hero back in the saddle and all grown up. For this year's trailer, the cheers were just as loud, but the overall reaction was more intellectual than emotional. Viewers wanted to know exactly how and why Link turned into a wolf, and just who was that mystery woman in the cloak, anyway?

At a roundtable discussion following the briefing, Twilight Princess producer Eiji Aonuma answered some questions that the trailer conjured. The woman, he confirmed, is Zelda, dressed in a traditional Japanese cloak worn during funerals. The reason for her state is the dark transformation of Hyrule and the emergence of creatures from the twilight realm. Hyrule needs a hero. That's where Link comes in.

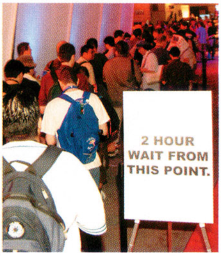
The story, which takes place decades after Ocarina of Time, and before The Wind Waker, has Link traveling back and forth between Hyrule and the twilight realm. It is there that his wolf form takes shape.

The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

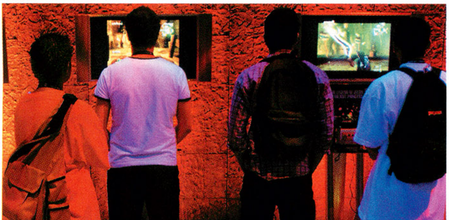




A familiar face was on hand to brave the booth's dangers.



Two hours? Child's play. Some waited more than four hours to play Zelda.



It Continued at the Show

Every day of the show, as soon as the doors opened, fans ran past the PlayStation area, past the booth babes, past the free keychains and plush toys and into the line for the playable demo of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. The reason for the mad rush at the beginning of the day was that later, the line would extend beyond the four-hour-wait mark. But those in the queue were among the few who were going to play the game that they've waited their entire gaming lives to experience. Any wait, no matter how long, was fine with them.

Once inside the Zelda area, gamers played among trees and inside a dungeon, where an animated skeleton and a wolf lurked. A costumed Link, the first ever to appear at a Nintendo event, was often seen posing with patrons and keeping the skeleton in its cage.

Outside the dungeon, the Zelda momentum continued at a station where players could download the Twilight Princess trailer, as well as demos of Polarium, Meteos and other DS games onto their DS systems—something for those who had not yet been inside the Zelda area to play while they were waiting in line.

NINTENDO POWER
VOLUME 194 AUGUST 2005
DVD SPECIAL
Nintendo
RP-T

It's Yours!

You've heard about it. You've read about it. You might have seen it online. Now you own the E3 trailer for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, included in this issue's bonus DVD. Plug it into your home theatre and enjoy the crisp image and Dolby Surround 5.1 sound as the beauty of what could turn out to be the GCN's greatest game washes over you.

It may take a couple of viewings to pick up all of the nuances of the trailer and to enjoy the fully orchestrated music composed specifically for the piece. We're still stunned by it.

Also included on the disc are clips of 29 more recent or future releases for the Nintendo GameCube, Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance.

Four separate pieces feature footage from Activision's GCN Fantastic Four—one for each member of the team. They're backed by original music by Taking Back Sunday, Jurassic 5, punk rockers The Explosion and girl group Go Betty Go.

Other highlights include footage from Viewtiful Joe DS and Viewtiful Joe VFX for the GCN.

WePlayedIt! A BLOW-BY-BLOW DESCRIPTION OF THE ZELDA DEMO

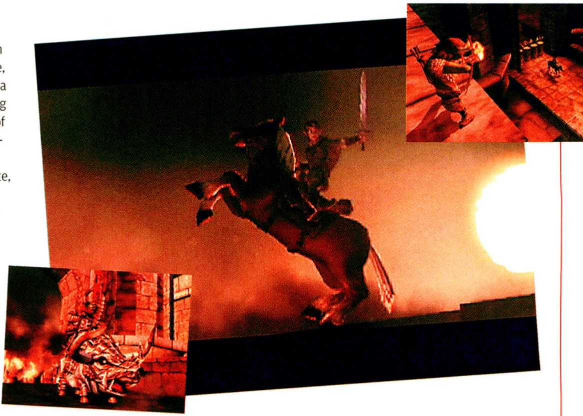
THE LEGEND OF
ZELDA

As darkness falls,
a hero will rise
ZELDA

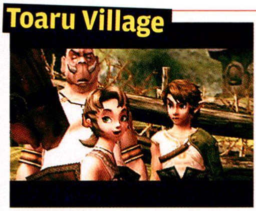
Four on the Floor

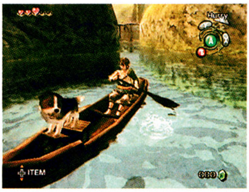
Nintendo's Zelda display mirrored the demo. Attendees played two levels, which take place in and around a remote village, in a forest setting. After walking through a passage that was inhabited by a menacing skeleton, gamers were treated to a pair of interior levels while soaking in the atmosphere of a dungeon room.

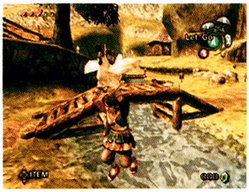
Although the levels are not yet complete, they already have the intangible quality that is unique to the Zelda universe. Producer Eiji Aonuma (pictured left, with microphone) told us that the team had spent a lot of time cultivating that quality by focusing on little things, "from Link's movement to very minute details about the game that you don't really notice right off the bat, but altogether they combine to really make it feel as if Link is living in a real world."

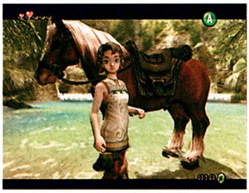


Toaru Village









The Adventure Begins

It may not end up being the first level of the final product, but the Toaru Village sequence has the feel of a tutorial. Link starts as a wrangler in a farming community outside of Hyrule, and takes on tasks such as herding goats on his horse, Epona, knocking down a bees' nest, retrieving a cradle that has floated downriver and collecting animals: a cat named Link, a hawk and a dog. Sword training and rupee gathering are also part of the mix.

The human Link has been invited to a summit in Hyrule, but before he can commence his journey, a beast on a boar storms into the village, injures his friend, Ilia, and kidnaps a boy named Colin.

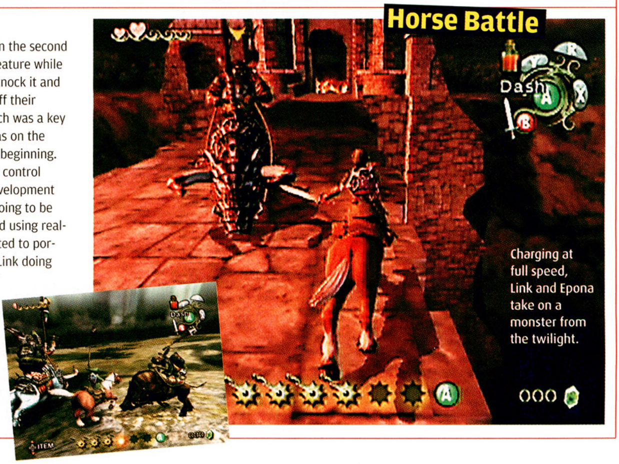
Upon giving chase, Link is pulled into a dark mist. Could this be the twilight that threatens Hyrule? We'll have to wait for the final game to find out.

Equestrian Quest

The boar-riding beast returns in the second demo level. Link chases the creature while riding Epona and attempts to knock it and a group of support creatures off their mounts. Horseback riding, which was a key part of last year's E3 trailer, was on the developers' to-do list from the beginning. Said Aonuma, "It was the main control mechanism that we started development on with the idea that if we're going to be telling the tale of adult Link and using realistic graphics to do so, we wanted to portray both mounted battle and Link doing various actions on horseback."

The sequence ends with the leader of the beasts and Link, still on his horse, in a battle on a narrow stone bridge that plays out like a joust—an exciting end to a challenging ride.

Horse Battle



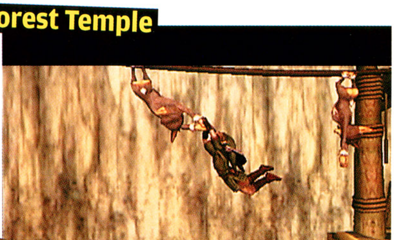
Charging at full speed, Link and Epona take on a monster from the twilight.

Whirlwind Tour

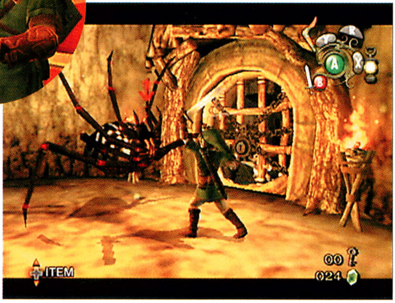
It's a Legend of Zelda tradition to introduce a new weapon or tool in every temple or dungeon. The item that Link picks up in the demo's Forest Temple is a variation of his boomerang, this time called the Gale Boomerang after its charged-up ability to create small tornados that give Link wind power. Aonuma promises that a whole collection of known Legend of Zelda weapons with new properties will appear in the final game.

The temple is Link's chance to explore and fight enemies on foot. When he deals deadly blows, the action freezes for a fraction of a second—hardly noticeable unless you're looking for it—to put punctuation on the end of the swing. Said Aonuma of the technique, "That isn't so much an attempt to emphasize violence as it is to give the player a response to the action of swinging the sword and hitting an enemy. It's to give the player that feeling of action and reaction in the game."

Although show attendees were able to play for only 15-minute intervals before they moved on to the next part of the demo, the temple is extensive and already feels like a finished game area.



Link crosses wide gaps with help from the Forest Temple's monkey population.

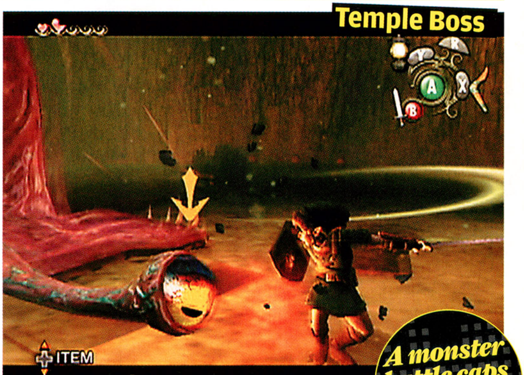


Let the Wind Carry You to Victory

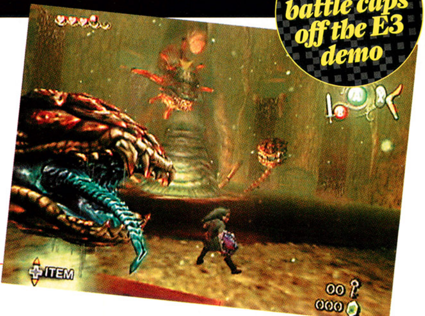
Rising from the murk of the Forest Temple's final chamber, a giant plant creature and its two menacing tentacles tower over and take swipes at the hero. Using the Gale Boomerang, Link can deliver explosives to his enemies by charging up the weapon, targeting the bomb then targeting the beast. Link starts by launching stray bomblike creatures at the tentacles, then uses explosives that a helpful baboon brings into the room via a zip line.

After the plant creature suffers the effects of a blast, it collapses in the middle of the chamber, where it is vulnerable to Link's sword attacks. Seconds pass and the monster recovers, then spews purple acid at its attacker. After several explosions and follow-up sword attacks, the creature finally succumbs and Link notches his first triumph over a temple boss.

Such engaging battles will abound when Twilight Princess launches in November.



A monster battle caps off the E3 demo



Zelda Impressions

Of everything I've seen from the demo and the trailer, nothing strikes me more about Twilight Princess's dark direction than seeing the kid tied to the pack leader's lance during the horseback scenario. The dude's not only abducted a child, but he's also toying with his victim. That's a real-world Amber-Alert kind o' wickedness, and part of a good-versus-evil story that really makes me want to take up the sword.
—Steven G.

Drama. Sure, we've experienced it to some extent in every Legend of Zelda game, but storytelling has generally taken a back seat to great play mechanics and level design. From what we've seen of Twilight Princess, however, it looks as if the developers have found a way to integrate dramatic pacing and a compelling story with the gameplay variety and puzzles. I've played only a small portion of the game, but I'm already getting chills. —George S.

For me, the big news regarding Twilight Princess is that some of the music will be fully orchestrated, according to Zelda composer Koji Kondo. The piece that he created for the trailer was quite stirring, and demonstrated how much an orchestral soundtrack can elevate the experience. As for the playable demos, I think I came away most impressed with the horseback battle. It's done very dramatically and should provide a nice change of pace throughout the adventure.
—Steve T.

If there's one major complaint about E3, it's about game demos. It's like getting served an appetizer at a fancy restaurant, then waiting four months for the main course. You start to get hungry. Take Twilight Princess, for instance. All playing the demo has done is make me more hungry. By that rationale, the demo has done what it should, but that doesn't make it fair! Feed me!
—Chris S.

It's not very often that playing a game for the first time generates an uncontrollable ear-to-ear grin on my face. Twilight Princess easily held up against the next-gen games of E3. It looks as good as any playable game that I saw at the show. The lighting effects in the temple are stunning. Pulling out Link's lantern exposes every little detail, showing how much love the developers have put into this project.
—Andy M.

E3Electricity

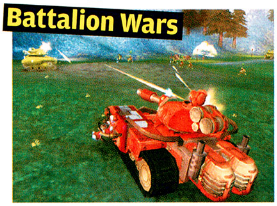
15 HIGHLIGHTS AT THE YEAR'S BIGGEST EVENT IN GAMING

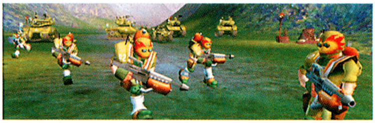
Battalion Wars Breaks Out

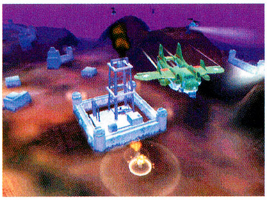
Players both command and battle in the first installment of Nintendo's Wars franchise on the GCN. Unlike the turn-based Advance Wars games, Battalion Wars focuses on real-time, onfield heroics. Developer Kuju London's producer Mark Washbrook told NP in an E3 interview, "We have moved toward an action-style game rather than tactical strategy," as evidenced by the pumped-up power of the players' directly controlled units. Yet RTS fans will still appreciate the optional overhead view and lock-on-and-order control over the air and ground forces of the Western Frontier army.

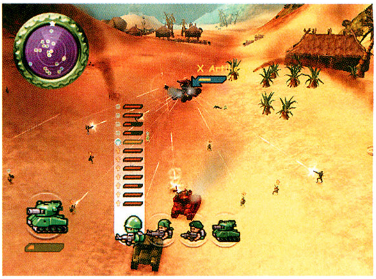
The series's cheerful art style gave the developers license to create fun physics, great control and, shared Washbrook, "a plot thread that allowed us to provide a little surprise and intrigue and advance the gameplay."

Battalion Wars







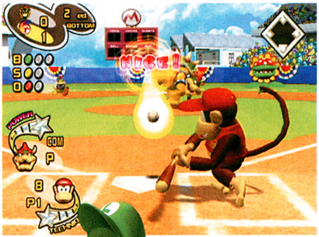


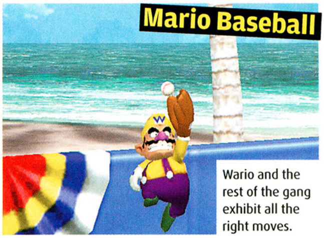
Powered-Up Pastime

Realistic baseball simulations are great, but sometimes you just want to hit the hide off the ball. Mario Baseball, the nine-to-a-side equivalent of Mario Power Tennis, delivers arcade action with the power of a 100-mph DK fastball. Mushroom Kingdom heroes square off in six parks, each with unique obstacles, and play ball with style. The game's fundamentals are strong and the more than 50 characters have specialties, such as Yoshi's Egg Ball and Mario's Fireball, useful for both pitching and hitting. Marquee matchups, such as Luigi versus Waluigi, get special treatment.

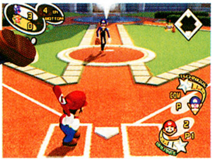
The E3 version included Exhibition mode and two minigames (the explosive Bob-omb Derby and the accuracy-testing Barrel Batter)—more modes and minigames are in the works.

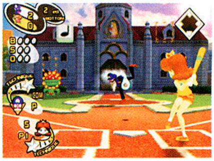
Mario Baseball





Wario and the rest of the gang exhibit all the right moves.



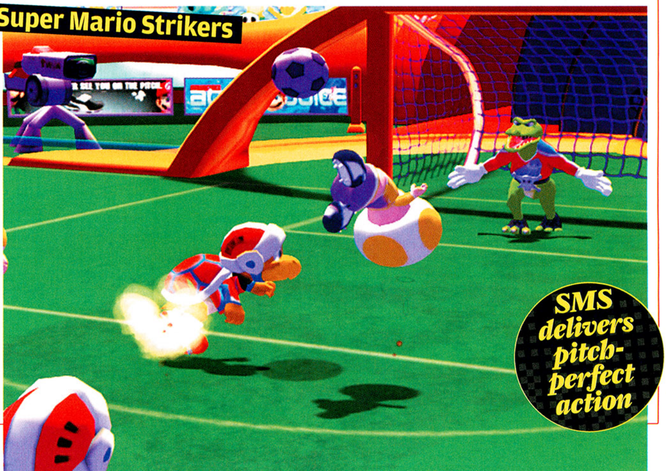


Get Your Kicks

Though the E3 version features just two teams and a single field, Super Mario Strikers scored big with attendees. In addition to straight-up passes, quick shots, one-timers and bicycle kicks that invite anyone to pick up a controller, the game incorporates meteoric blast shots that bring competitors to their knees, and Mario Kart-style power-up items. A spiked red Koopa shell bowls over the opposition, a Chain Chomp wreaks havoc on the pitch. Blue shells freeze competitors, and mushrooms give your players a jolt of speed.

In addition to the Grudge Match mode shown at E3, the final game will include both a Battle mode and a Super Battle mode, as well as Custom Battles built for short matches or marathon sessions.

Super Mario Strikers



SMS delivers pitch-perfect action

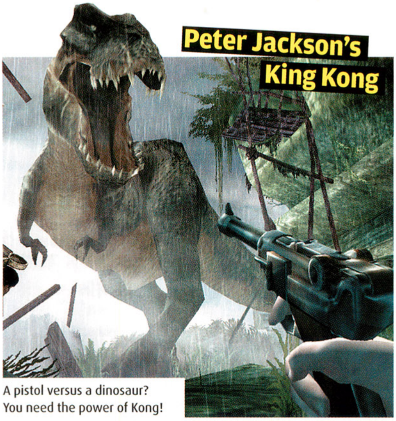
Peter Jackson's King Kong

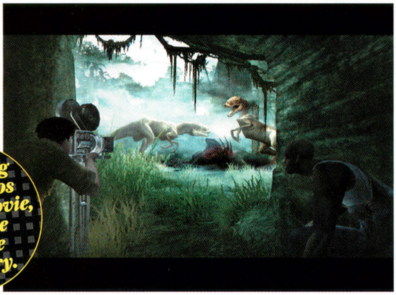
Ubisoft's Monkey Business

If there's one word to describe Peter Jackson's King Kong, it's big, as in 40 percent of Ubisoft's booth big. Towering 20 feet over the rest of the publisher's displays, and dressed in Skull Island bamboo, the King Kong demo theatre attracted showgoers like tsetse flies to a bulging vein. Inside, security guards told attendees to put their bags on the floor and to cross their arms to ensure that no one would take photographs of what they were about to see.

The live demo began with a run through the island's ruins from adventurer Jack Driscoll's point of view. Using flaming spears that ignited the jungle brush, and vintage firearms, the hero fought off dinosaurs and giant bugs while he and his companions chased the ape.

When the party caught up with Kong, control transferred to the beast—the camera holding back in third-person perspective to capture him in all of his hairy glory. Gray and square-shouldered, the creature practically filled the frame, leaving little room for the T. rex with whom he was tumbling. After the fight, the demonstrator took Kong on a trip through the ruins, grabbing ledges and swinging. When he stopped, the monkey let out a scream that was so loud, the air moving around him warped the image. That's definitely big.


A pistol versus a dinosaur? You need the power of Kong!



Featuring more dinos than the movie, the game tells the full story.

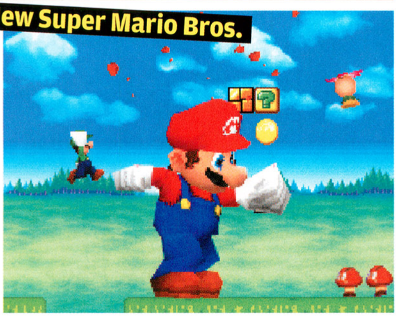
New Super Mario Bros.

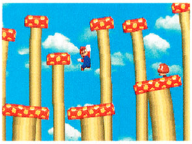
Old School, All New

Set up for both single-player and two-player cooperative runs through a field, a desert and a fortress, the return of the Super Mario Bros. side-scrolling series drew big crowds of old-school gamers at the show. Just when you think that you've seen everything the series has to offer, you see something new. The bulk of the action takes place on the top screen, with the bottom screen reserved for a progress bar and item storage. When you need one of your stored items, such as a mushroom or a Fire Flower, you tap it to make it drop into the playing field. When the brothers Mario sink into certain pipes, they go underground and the action transfers to the bottom screen.

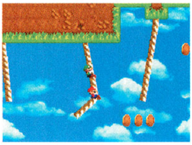
Classic enemies—Goombas and Piranha Plants—grow to enormous proportions. And, in the E3 version's most inspired moment, the 3-D rendered player-controlled character also grows to screen-filling size, allowing you to become Godzilla to the buglike enemies and brick walls.

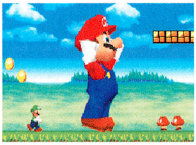
E3 attendees who have the original SMB titles burned into memory—the ones who were calling New Super Mario Bros. (the working title) the DS game of the show—were dazzled by its variations on the familiar SMB themes. For those who know Mario's place in platforming history, this is one to watch for.





Platforms swaying left and right like palm trees in a tropical storm, swinging ropes and supersized Mario. Some things are comfortably familiar in New Super Mario Bros., and others are wonderfully different.





Interaction Revisited

Although I'm all for games that offer an exciting experience with lots of action and conflict, it was refreshing to see a slate of titles at E3 that are more than simple twitch exercises—games that bend genres and even create new categories. The Nintendo DS, with its touch screen and built-in microphone, is doing a great job of encouraging developers to innovate in the ways that players interface with games. The realistic scratch-and-call pet interaction in Nintendogs, Split mode in Viewtiful Joe DS and stylus-driven surgery in Trauma Center are great examples.

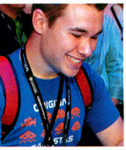
A slate of large-scale GCN adventures offer new ideas, too. The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, with its expansion of the go-anywhere-do-anything sandbox concept and Peter Jackson's King Kong, which mixes first-person with third-person perspective to underline the difference in scale between its two player-controlled subjects, create fresh concepts in established categories. Add Battalion Wars, Twilight Princess, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One and Ultimate Spider-Man, and you've got an E3 to remember.

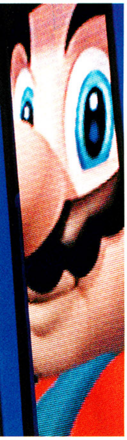
—George S.

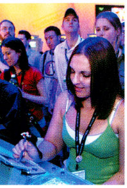
GEORGE'S TOP 10

A mix of great action and innovation.

1> The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2> Peter Jackson's King Kong
3> Mario Kart DS
4> New Super Mario Bros.
5> Call of Duty 2: Big Red One
6> Viewtiful Joe DS
7> James Bond 007: From Russia with Love
8> Nintendogs
9> Metroid Prime Hunters
10> Ultimate Spider-Man





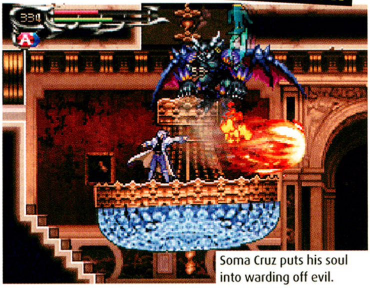


Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow

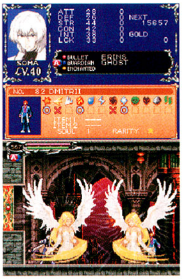
A New Dawn

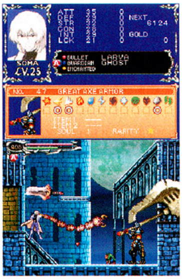
The newly titled Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow opens with an impressive anime-style intro that prepares you for the monster-slaying masterpiece at hand. Though this sequel to Aria of Sorrow doesn't stray far from the Castlevania formula, it doesn't have to. The classic gameplay remains as compelling as ever, complemented by some well-conceived and unobtrusive touch-screen elements. The other major addition is that the Tactical Souls from the previous game now evolve as you collect duplicates, upgrading the abilities they bestow you with in the process.

At the show, we had the opportunity to sit down with legendary Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi. With talk of new consoles dominating the headlines, we asked where he saw gaming headed. "I like the word innovation," Igarashi replied with a chuckle. "Everyone talks a lot about how much more powerful the upcoming consoles are than the current machines. What's happening, though, is that they're shifting the focus to the screen itself instead of gameplay. The word innovation means trying to find a solution in a way that I consider more appealing. As a game developer, of course I'm always looking for more enhanced graphics. But as a gamer, I want games to be more fun. In that regard, I consider innovation more important."



Soma Cruz puts his soul into warding off evil.





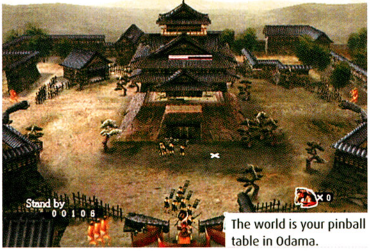
Odama

Ball and Bell Battle

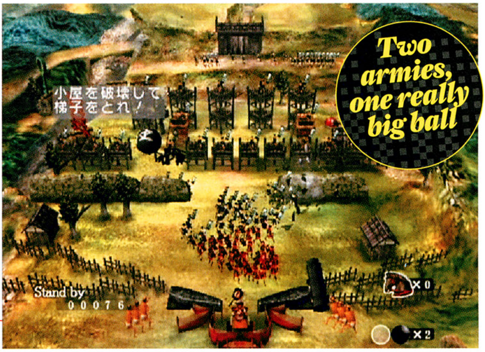
If you visited the Odama area of Nintendo's booth, you heard, over the E3 cacophony, pinball generals giving orders to their troops: "charge," "back up," "left," "right," "rush the gates." The Feudal Japan-set rolling-ball-battle game was at last year's show, but E3 2005 marked the debut of its voice-command feature. As enemy forces approach from the north, you must command allied troops against them, clearing the way for the transport of a big bell to the far north section of the playing field. In addition to soldiers, you have a huge metal ball—an Odama—which you can use to flatten opposing forces by steering it with equally large pinball flippers. The trick is to coordinate the movement of your troops with the movement of the ball to minimize friendly casualties and keep the bell moving.

The game's E3 version included an open field, a mountain stream and a long scrolling path to a castle gate.

From the lauding that the game received from attendees, it sounds like it's ready to roll.



The world is your pinball table in Odama.



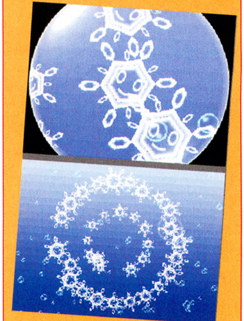
Two armies, one really big ball

DS: Next Progenitor

E3 PICKS

The question of what next-gen gaming should be has had me at war with some friends since E3 '04, when the DS and PSP faced off. This year, as they peed themselves silly for the super-sharp (yet superpredictable) power of Sony and Microsoft's next consoles, I came away from E3 '05 with big ammo for argument: Mr. Iwata may still be in Revolution tease mode, but Nintendo's booth made the case for innovation with a massive phalanx of DS titles—games that will transform our gaming lives in the coming months and (more importantly) give me absolute faith in Iwata's ability to deliver on the Revolution. Animal Crossing DS? A killer app for bringing my casual-gamer friends into Wi-Fi Internet play. Nintendogs? No doubt, the next phenomenon to catch the world by storm. And Electroplankton? A cult hit at the least, but it's right up the alley of all the caz gamers who'll buy a DS for Nintendogs. And other publishers are dreaming big on the DS, too, which bodes well for Revolution development. Black & White Creatures will bring my all-time favorite PC game to the DS; Sonic Rush will restore Sega's hedgehog to 2-D glory on the double screen. And Trauma Center? Pass the scalpel!

—Steven G.



STEVEN'S TOP 10

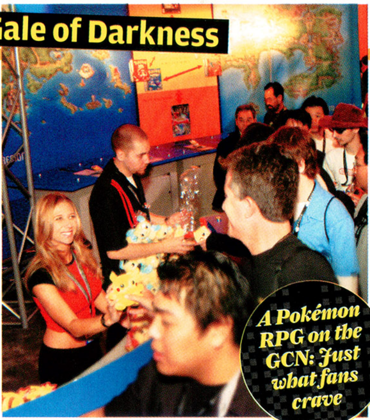
Loved Zelda, loved DS innovation more.

1> Nintendogs
2> Animal Crossing DS
3> The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
4> Mario Kart DS
5> Electroplankton
6> Black & White Creatures
7> Sonic Rush
8> Viewtiful Joe DS
9> Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
10> Trauma Center: Under the Knife

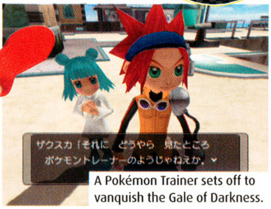
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness

Plusle and Minun normally inhabit the tall grass north of Slateport City, but during E3, plush versions of the respectively positively- and negatively-charged Pokémon were in the Pokémon XD area of Nintendo's booth, ripe for the snagging by everyone who was willing to brave the large crowd to give the new GCN adventure a spin.

As the game's recently announced subtitle, Gale of Darkness, suggests, the people and Pokémon of Orre are in a bad state, haunted by the specter of Shadow Lugia. Armed with a Snag Machine and accompanied by an Eevee, players set out to save Orre, Snagging and purifying Pokémon along the way. Pokémon fans left happy with toys and the promise of a new adventure.



A Pokémon RPG on the GCN: Just what fans crave



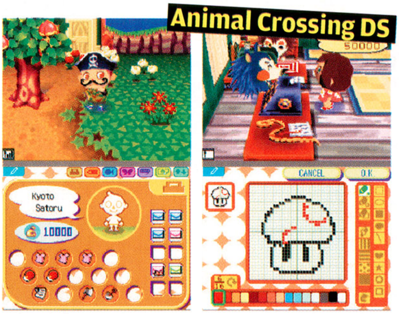
ザクスカ「それに　どうやら　見たところ
ポケモントレーナーのようじゃねえか。

A Pokémon Trainer sets off to vanquish the Gale of Darkness.

Village Venture

While Charles Martinet, the voice of Mario, played in the virtual village of Animal Crossing DS with show attendees from a remote location, NP chatted with Katsuya Eguchi, the project's producer. Eguchi explained that players will be able to room together, four in the same house, and each will have the ability to rearrange furnishings. That, he said, "is to encourage players to negotiate among themselves, directly." Players will make a list of friends who are allowed to visit their village and possibly invite others into their group via a PictoChat-created message transmitted to village signboards. Animal Crossing continues to be all about making connections.

Animal Crossing DS

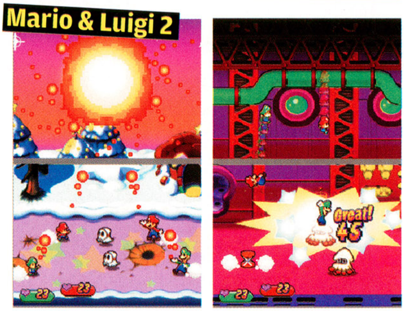


And Babies Make Four

Some E3 attendees were teaming up for co-op play with Mario and Luigi in New Super Mario Bros.; others were juggling the actions of both brothers and their baby versions by themselves in the single-player, four-character sequel to Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga. If you thought the double-team attacks in the GBA original were a handful, wait until you experience the four-pronged fighting of the Mario quartet.

Although battling and area navigation usually take place on one screen while the other screen displays a map, the action spreads to both screens when the big brothers go in one direction and the babies go elsewhere.

Mario & Luigi 2



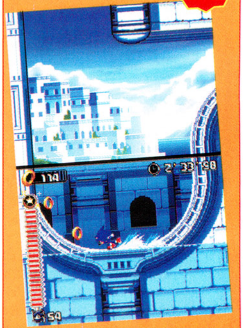
Old Friends

While I appreciate all of the experimental stuff being done on the DS, what really set my trousers ablaze was the bounty of side-scrollers on display for the handheld. Sonic Rush is a significant leap over its GBA predecessors, and word has it that Yuji Naka himself is deeply involved in its development. The dual screens allow for more vertically oriented level design, which believe it or not, creates an even more frenetic experience. Of course, Sonic's longtime rival is finally getting back in the platforming act as well. New Super Mario Bros. is a hoot. That we get both games in the same year seems too good to be true. Mix in a new Castlevania and Gunstar Heroes, and I'll be spending more time with my handhelds than ever before.

On the console front, Twilight Princess was definitely my game of the show. It easily lived up to my expectations, and in some areas, surpassed them. Going into the show, I wasn't particularly interested in King Kong, despite the fact that I love Michel Ancel's previous works (especially Beyond Good & Evil). Now that I've seen the game in action, though, I can't wait to get my hands on it. It's just so beautiful and cinematic.

—Steve T.

E3 PICKS



STEVE'S TOP 10

Don't listen to those other jokers.

1> The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2> Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
3> Peter Jackson's King Kong
4> Sonic Rush
5> Mario & Luigi 2
6> Gunstar Super Heroes
7> Prince of Persia 3
8> New Super Mario Bros.
9> Mario Kart DS
10> Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance

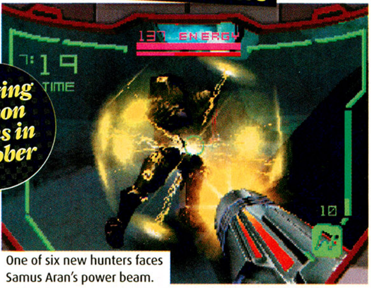
Shooting Is Good on the DS

The developers of the GCN Metroid Prime titles have been careful to call the games first-person adventures to point to the fact that the games emphasize exploration over gunplay, but Kensuke Tanabe, the Nintendo Company Ltd. producer in charge of the upcoming Metroid Prime Hunters, calls the new title a shooter. "As a handheld game, we have focused on convenience," said Tanabe in an E3 interview with NP. "You can play wherever you want, whatever time you want. So more than adventure, we centered on the enjoyment of shooting." Doing the shooting, in addition to Samus Aran, are six new bounty hunters, each with special powers and a unique weapon.

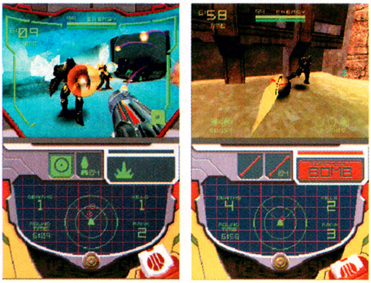
So, in a multiplayer game, how do the developers ensure that the hunters will be different but balanced in power? "We do not intend to make them equal," explained Tanabe. Instead, he said, it's more like a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors, where each hunter has a counterpart that he can dominate. "So friends selecting in the living room try to think of which character they should be to beat the next guy. At that point, the game is starting." And where does Samus Aran fit into the mix? "Samus is almighty," explained the game designer. "The other characters have more specialized abilities."

Metroid Prime Hunters

Hunting season opens in October



One of six new hunters faces Samus Aran's power beam.



Nintendogs

Even the hardened game journalists at Nintendo's pre-E3 media briefing melted in awe at the sight of Nintendogs's digital puppies and G4's Tina Wood when the TV host took her pug Mia through the paces of touch- and voice-controlled command. Shigeru Miyamoto even got in on the act with a Mario-hat-sporting shiba. The pair exchanged stories of canine ownership while their puppies nuzzled.

In NP's interview with Hideki Konno, the producer explained that the game is about "establishing communication with your puppy, teaching it to do things, training it and just enjoying the experience."

Already a huge hit in Japan, Nintendogs is set to reach North America in August with a selection of breeds tailored to the western audience. Konno said that the breeds vary in personality, as do the individual dogs in each category. Players select dogs, from three in each breed, to match their own personalities.

Tina Wood and Shigeru Miyamoto interface while their Nintendogs do the same.

I Heart Mario

Zelda might be the hottest story around, but as a whole I'm way more interested in what my best friend, Mario, is doing. The new Super Mario Bros. takes me back to 1991 faster than *I Love the '90s*, and Super Mario Strikers is like Super Smash Bros. with nets and a ball. I've even been bustin' a quick move to Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix when time permits (and long after everyone around the office has left). Beyond Nintendo's first family, I'm giddy over the future of the DS. Castlevania looks like everything I could ask for and more—awesome graphics, but maintaining the 2-D approach that made me obsess over the GBA games. Given the amount of item- and soul-swapping, as well as map-studying involved in Aria of Sorrow, I can see how two screens will help immensely. I feared that Trauma Center was all gimmick until I got a little hands-on time in the ER—after I was done playing it, I felt ready to perform a pancreatic tumor removal on the next coworker to walk by. (Fortunately, Andy suffered from that exact ailment, and he's recovering nicely.) Lost in Blue seems amazing, as well. Blowing into your DS to get a fire going? Cooking food by closing your DS for just the right amount of time? That kind of stuff is brilliant! I'm glad to see developers showing games that display the many ways to incorporate the hardware into the game experience.

—Chris S.

E3 PICKS

CHRIS'S TOP 10

Zelda's not #1? Yeah that's right. Sue me!

1> Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
2> The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
3> New Super Mario Bros.
4> Lost in Blue
5> Super Mario Strikers
6> Viewtiful Joe DS
7> The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction
8> Prince of Persia 3
9> Mario Kart DS
10> Call of Duty 2: Big Red One

NINTENDO POWER
VOLUME 194 AUGUST 2005

DVD SPECIAL

Collection of video clips from upcoming hit games

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- The Legend of Zelda - E3 2005 Trailer
- Digimon World 4
- Fantastic Four
- Medal of Honor: European Assault
- Mega Man X Collection
- One Piece: Grand Battle
- Viewtiful Joe VFX Battle
- Zatch Bell!
- Hello Kitty Roller Rescue

NINTENDO DS

- Kirby: Canvas Curse
- Nintendogs
- Polarium
- WarioWare: Touched!
- Yoshi Touch & Go
- Castlevania
- The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
- Lost in Blue
- Need for Speed Underground 2
- Pac-Pix
- Pac 'n Roll
- Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney
- Puyo Pop Fever
- Trauma Center: Under the Knife
- Viewtiful Joe DS

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- Atomic Betty
- Dragon Ball GT: Transformation
- Mega Man Zero 4
- Rebelstar: Tactical Command
- Riviera: The Promised Land
- Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King

EXCLUSIVE
The new E3 2005 LEGEND OF ZELDA trailer in DOLBY DIGITAL

Select demos presented in DOLBY DIGITAL

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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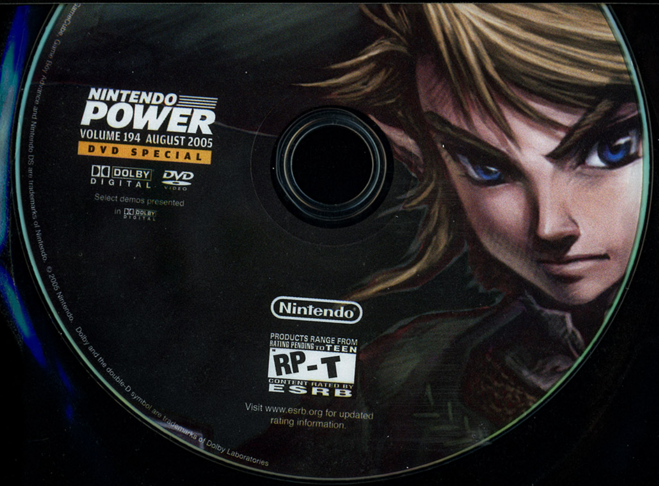
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DVD VIDEO
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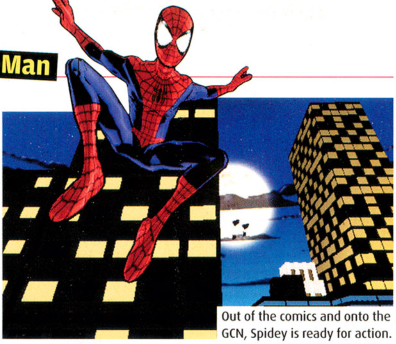
Ultimate Spider-Man

Web of Intrigue

Using a technique that the Treyarch development team calls motion-graphic story panels, Ultimate Spider-Man brings the latest comic book iteration of the action-ready arachnid to life. Popping out of story panels, Spider-Man and Venom—both player-controlled characters—share time in an interwoven story by Marvel's Brian Michael Bendis. The effect is as if you picked up a comic and started playing it.

While Spidey uses skillful acrobatics and web-slinging to navigate the game's environments, Venom leaps, claws into buildings to climb them and lands with a street-shaking thud. Spider-Man's sequences are more open-ended than Venom's; players will unlock the villain for open exploration upon completion of the main game.

The boss battles that Activision revealed at E3 are multilayered fights against Rhino and Electro. More details are soon to come.



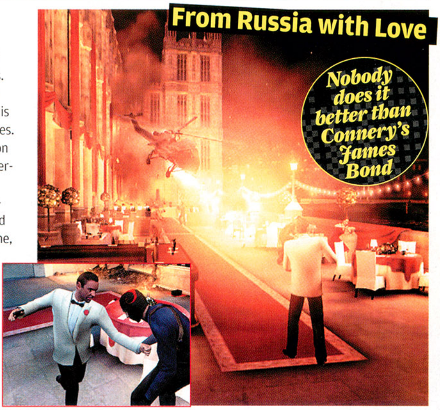
Out of the comics and onto the GCN, Spidey is ready for action.

From Russia with Love

Connery Comes Back

Reprising arguably his most famous film role, Sean Connery gives EA's James Bond 007: From Russia with Love a shot of class. Not only does he appear in flashback film sequences, but his voice, newly recorded, is featured during gameplay and in cut-scenes.

The adventure, which is loosely based on Connery's second Bond film, uses a new version of the Everything or Nothing engine and features 14 levels in addition to multiplayer areas. The E3 demonstrator pointed out that Bond jumps freely for the first time, allowing him easy and open exploration, and he is able to target specific parts of enemies—such as a grenade hanging from a belt—to trigger one-shot kills. The demonstrator also revealed that Connery may reprise the role yet again in EA's next Bond game. Could Goldfinger be in the works?

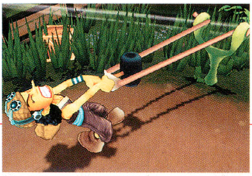


Nobody does it better than Connery's James Bond

One Piece: Grand Battle

Bandai Goes for Fighting Gold

With Zatch Bell! and One Piece: Grand Battle, Bandai delivered a one-two punch of anime-based battlers at E3. One Piece producer Yoshiya Tanaka said that the fighting format was a great way to show off the skills of the pirating show's characters and give them a more game-friendly look. The seven environments are also stylized re-creations. "We took the original scenes from the show and started throwing in more things to make it fun and interactive," said Tanaka. The extras include objects that the fighters can pick up and throw, and moving obstacles such as a charging cow. The developers also added a huge number of unlockables, "from hidden characters and hidden stages to very miniscule stuff that fans of the game or fans of the property will appreciate." There are so many unlockables, in fact, that Tanaka is convinced that no single player will be able to find them all.



A band of 16 pirates and 32 helper characters face off for booty and bragging rights in Bandai's second one-on-one GCN fighter of the season.

Expectations Met

E3 PICKS

I could have told you that Twilight Princess would earn my number-one slot before I even played it. The Zelda series has never let me down (except for the horrible CD-i games—but let us speak of them no more), and the most-recent trailer alone was enough to win my heart. Fire Emblem is another GCN title that lived up to the hype. While the E3 demo provided only a glimpse into what is obviously a very deep game, it was enough to show off some of the title's nicest features. Though FE garnered the bulk of my attention, I found myself being mysteriously drawn back to DDR: Mario Mix over and over again. I'm no DDR fanatic, but seeing Mario and Luigi gettin' down was just too fun for me to ignore. And my growing affinity for Trace Memory came as a surprise as well. Like Fire Emblem, Trace Memory is a tough nut to crack in a 15-minute demo session, but the story and characters sparked my interest enough for me to commit to playing it when it hits North America. In the end, the DS really stole the show. Mario Kart had easily the best DS graphics to date. Hunters has been vastly improved since the First Hunt demo, proving me wrong by showing that the FPS genre can succeed on the DS. And Chibi Robo? I don't really know what the heck it's about, but I had a blast being tiny and plugging myself into wall outlets to recharge. —Andy M.

ANDY'S TOP 10

Letterman, eat your heart out!

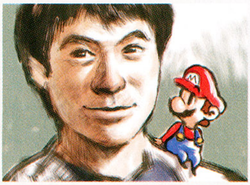
1> **The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess**
2> **Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance**
3> **Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow**
4> **Mario Kart DS**
5> **Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix**
6> **Trace Memory**
7> **Metroid Prime Hunters**
8> **New Super Mario Bros.**
9> **Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction**
10> **Chibi Robo**

INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 3)

PORTRAIT OF NINTENDO'S ILLUSTRATOR



YUSUKE NAKANO | NINTENDO | KYOTO

When players aren't immersed in their favorite titles, they carry images of the heroes and scenarios in their mind's eye. But it's *illustrations* that do the heavy lifting, spreading the look and feel of a game deep into the real world. We're talking about the artwork that appears on everything from the pages of manuals, magazines and game guides, to T-shirts, lunch boxes and skateboards. Illustrators deserve a lot of the credit for helping us gamers wear our favorite series on our sleeves, so to speak, so we're delighted to hear directly from Yusuke Nakano, one of Nintendo's foremost (and highly passionate) illustrators, to get the story behind the images—like his darkly evocative Link/Wolf illustration that graced NP's cover last month—that have already begun connecting our world with The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess.

NINTENDO POWER
HUGE E3
KILLER 7 TOP TIPS!
GAMES GET REEL
A REVEALING LOOK INSIDE THE NEW ZELDA!
LINK'S SECRET IDENTITY

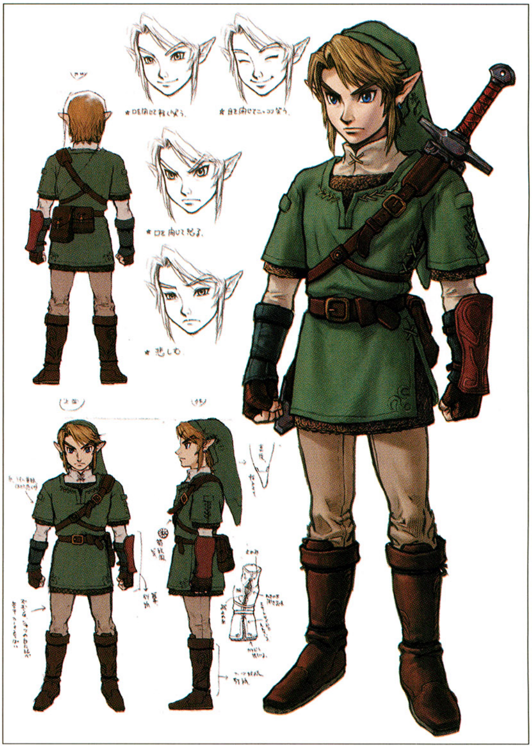
Nakano dreamed up the Link/Wolf illustration for last month's NP cover story.

Under Cover of Twilight

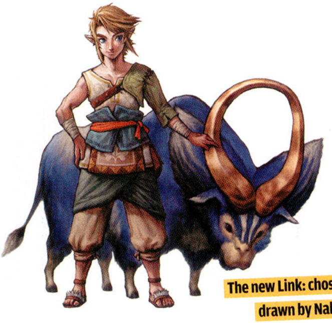
It's always a fascinating challenge to create artwork that authentically reflects a game, but developing the Link/Wolf illustration for Nintendo Power? Now *that* was quite a task. I always sit down with a game's developers to talk through what kind of artwork we should create, but specific details about a game still in development are continually shifting. It's difficult to pin down the gameplay details to commit to artwork, but working the process in reverse—making the development follow the illustrations—would be an impossibility! So [the developers and illustrators] work very closely. In the case of our Link/Wolf illustration, prepared in the weeks leading up to the game's debut at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, we could at least complete Link's face and the head of the wolf for your cover. One other thing: The emblem at the crux of the illustration is taken from Hyrule Castle in Ocarina of Time. Did you notice that?

The Look of a Hero

At Nintendo, I'm responsible for more than illustrations for Zelda games, but for Twilight Princess, producer Eiji



Link will be no less expressive than he was in Wind Waker, and Nakano's illustrations helped guide the Twilight Princess developers in a new direction for the bigger, tougher hero.



The new Link: chosen by fate, drawn by Nakano.

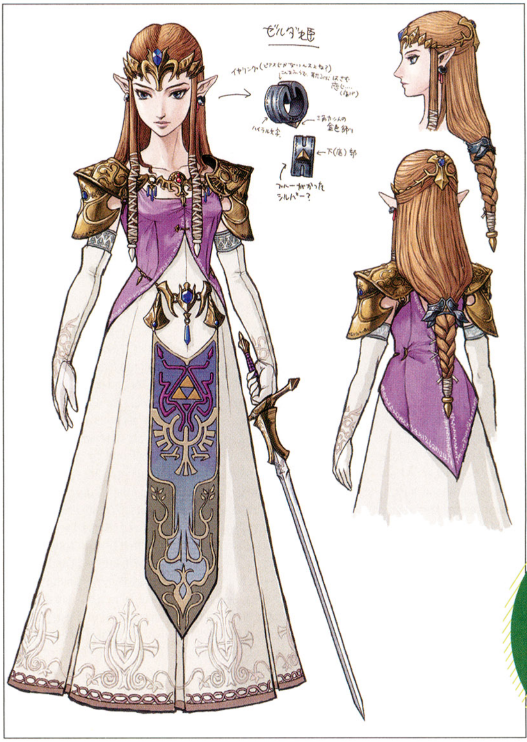
Aonuma brought me into game development at a much earlier stage than usual. I helped build the new Zelda game and assisted with the preproduction work, where I developed many sketches that explored how Link and monsters, for instance, could be expressed during development. Participating in the earliest stages of development was a first for me as an artist at Nintendo.

Link is a very difficult character to draw. He's the hero of the story. He needs to be liked by everyone. And he needs to have a characteristic, attractive style. For this Zelda game, the illustration challenge is even more daunting; he's an adult this time around. I had quite a discussion with art director Satoru Takizawa about the new Link and drew a variety of sketches. We tried to find a new direction for Link's face and body that would emote a wilder spirit than we'd seen before. When we finally agreed upon a direction, Miyamoto and Aonuma vetoed the style. He looks like an old fogey, they said. So we went back to the drawing board!

I knew from the beginning that it wouldn't be an easy job, since many people at Nintendo would have a specific vision about how the adult Link should look. I think quite a few of them were using the older Link from Ocarina of Time as their foundation, especially since some of the younger people at the company say that they wanted to work for Nintendo because they liked Ocarina's Link a lot. I remember when I was illustrating the grown-up Link in Ocarina of Time, I was very careful about his look: basically, he's a handsome guy. Broad-chested—that's important. If his body were too slender with his handsome facial features, he'd end up looking more effete and aristocratic. I think that Link looks authentic—the Link that we've all come to know in the Legend of Zelda world—when he has a fair amount of muscle and a physically conditioned body, since he needs to look impressive when he's taking action, like when he's riding a horse. Now Princess Zelda—she's basically a beautiful woman. And in the new Zelda game, we're portraying the princess as if she's wondering about something, and I've connected feelings of hopelessness and anxiousness to her illustrations. Overall, this is the same for Link, too. I have tried to avoid generating images that are *too* full of gloom and doom, however. As a side note, I seem to remember that my illustrations of Sheik—the mysterious character from Ocarina of Time who very famously turned out to be Princess Zelda in disguise—were also very popular when that game was released. Of course, it is entirely up to Aonuma whether Sheik will show up in the new Zelda game or not.

Fantasy Made Reality

My generation grew up during a high point for animated series, manga and movies in Japan, and I loved popular shows like *StarBlazer Yamato* and *Gundam*, and manga-turned-movies like Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä*. My interests shifted to the world of art when I was in junior high, and American comic art and fantasy art became my passions; in particular, the style of muscular, expressionistic art done by Richard Corben and Frank Frazetta. At about the same time, I also liked hard funk—the music of James Brown and Sly & The Family Stone—so I was kind of a strange guy in high school, drawing hyper-muscular fantasy art and listening to that kind of music. I studied oil painting in art school, a totally different world from my major interest in fantasy art, but I wanted to hone my drawing skills. I wanted to work as an illustrator but had no idea how to make it happen and was pretty concerned about my future as an artist.

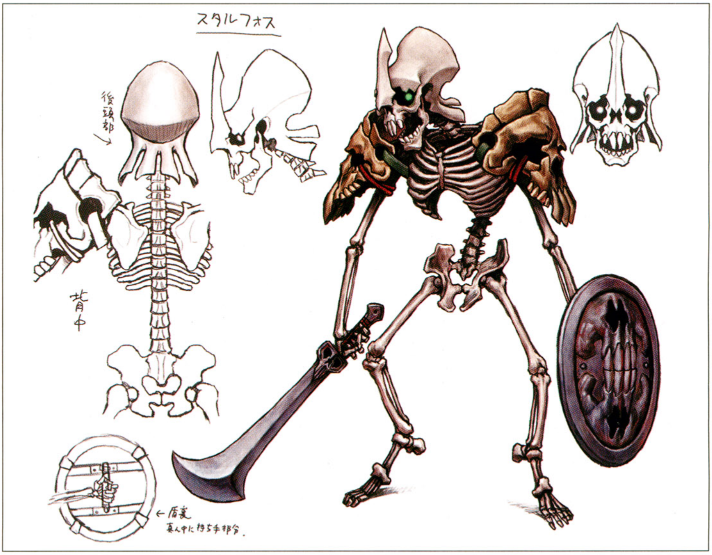

ゼルダ姫
イヤリング（ピアスじゃないんスよね？）
こんなふうで、耳たぶにはさむ感じ……
ハイラル文字
金色飾り
←下（底）部
ブルーがかったシルバー？

A new Link, a new Zelda: Nakano also lent his illustrative technique to Nintendo's quest to get at the heart of a more pensive princess before development commenced.

I developed many sketches that explored how Link and monsters could be expressed during development.

At the time, I didn't think video games were anything so special, even though it was already a big part of young people's lives. Though I'd played video games since my youth, I really wasn't that much of an enthusiast. Then I played my first Legend of Zelda game, A Link to the Past, and discovered the Fire Emblem series, which I liked a lot. In those days, the video game industry was still young, a new kind of business in Japan, and people in the industry were trying many ideas, including developing art for their video game worlds. I saw that the fantasy-art style was frequently used, and I thought that it was right up my alley, so I was compelled to contact Nintendo about a job.

After my first year with the company, I was in charge of monitoring the print quality of exported game materials—not a creative job, but it opened the door to the development department, where I worked on the designs of packages and manuals. Back then, Nintendo outsourced most illustrations, but when Nintendo launched the Nintendo 64—and Super Mario 64—it decided to start doing internal art development, and I was soon put in charge of creating 3-D illustrations. Ever since the N64 era, I've created the illustrations for several Mario series: Mario Kart, Mario Golf and Mario Tennis.



Skeletons have been around Hyrule for ages, but Nakano's sketches have given them menacing new dimensions.

Right Style, Right Time

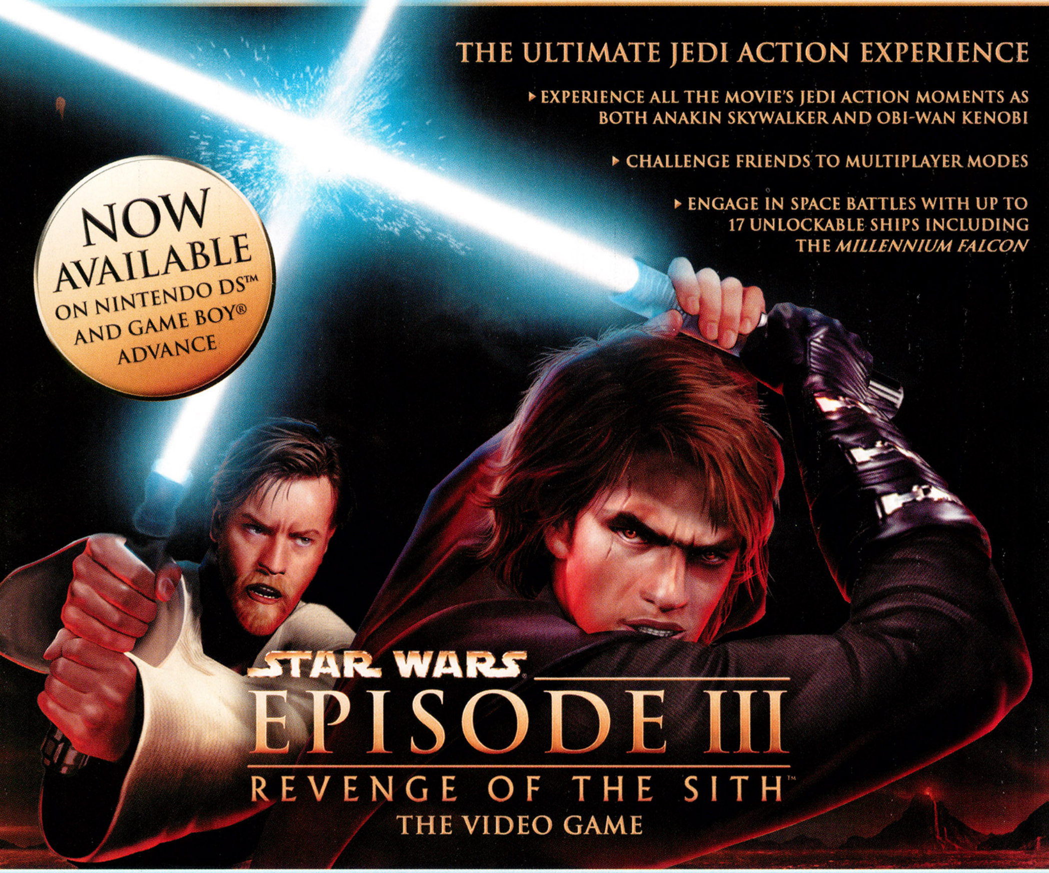
When I first heard about the Ocarina of Time project, and the need to create a new Link, I knew it was the job for me. I put my name out there for the project by creating some sample illustrations of my ideas. Fortunately, Yoshiaki Koizumi, one of the game's directors, liked the drawings, so I was put in charge of the illustrations. I loved the project and drew constantly; it was almost like I was giving vent to all of my passions through those drawings. And I'll tell you one thing: drawing bad guys is worthwhile work. It felt great to draw characters like Ganondorf, exaggerating his fearsome, powerful presence. But my favorite Ocarina illustration was of Impa, Zelda's royal protector: It was extremely rare that Nintendo had such a muscular woman in one of its games. She was a natural fit for my preferred art style.

Though I hadn't intended to keep illustrating the Zelda series, I went on to work on Majora's Mask, The Wind Waker and other Zelda games, as well. Wind Waker was an interesting experience, since the art style was so vastly different, and my job was to build upon that style, or bring it together with other elements to create great illustrations. Of course, I've worked on other titles in addition to those in the Zelda and Mario series; I developed the Wave Race: Blue Storm art and—given how dark we're going with Twilight Princess—you might be surprised to discover that I've even drawn Animal Crossing illustrations, too.

Today I still love American comics and fantasy art. While I was working on Majora's Mask, I was especially into the *Hellboy* series. Who knows? Maybe its imagery influenced my own illustration style for the game. My favorite comic artists right now are Ashley Wood and Phil Hale, two artists who have really made their mark on Marvel and DC Comics with their gritty, tough styles. And at E3 '04, I had a chance to meet one of my other favorites, Joe Madureira, one of the artists who works on the *X-Men* comics. And as Japanese animation has become more popular in the US, it really seems like American comics are absorbing some influences, so we're seeing new talent emerge in comics. It's fascinating to watch.

Overall, the world of Twilight Princess has been much more attractive to me personally than Ocarina of Time. Though I'm always involved in multiple projects, Twilight Princess is by far my biggest priority, and it's where I'm investing most of my energy. I'm surrounded by many, many people who are investing their beliefs and passions in the game. I'm definitely one of them. I'm dead serious when I say that this project is a match made in heaven for me as an illustrator. Count on me to help make Twilight Princess live up to your wildest dreams.

Nintendo DS™ and Game Boy® Advance Screenshots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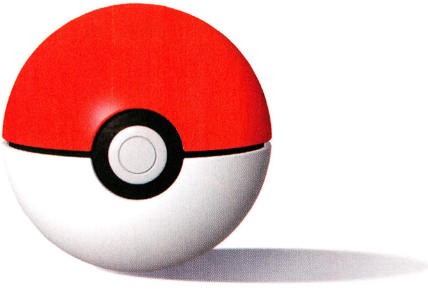
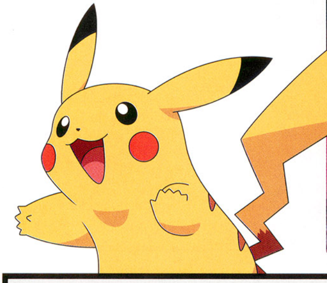
Built to Last

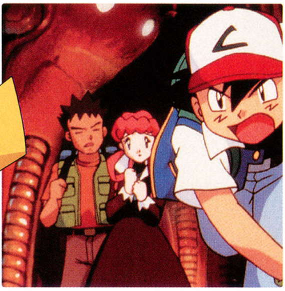
What began as one man's pet project has become an established giant in the entertainment industry— there's no denying that Pokémon has left a permanent mark on our culture. As the proven franchise nears its 10-year anniversary, its world continues to grow with no sign of slowing down. How has Pokémon outlasted the hype?

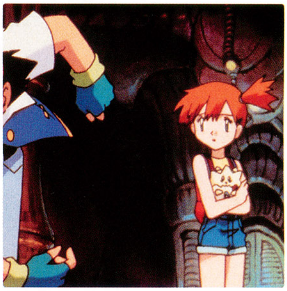
By Andy Myers



Wild MEWTWO
appeared!







When Pokémon landed on North American shores, millions of adults were baffled by its instant success, which eventually led to an outburst of concern. Parents could not accept the fact that something they couldn't understand had captured the undivided attention of their children. How could something too complicated for grown-ups to grasp be second nature to their kids? Magazines and television shows delved deep into the subject, interviewing just about every child psychologist in the US in an attempt to figure out if Pokémon was a healthy pastime for the younger generation. The experts were split—some thought it was perfectly acceptable, teaching kids positive values and analytical skills, while others believed it to be detrimental to children's well being. But most adults agreed on one thing: in a year or two, the kids would move on to something else. The fad would soon be over; no need to panic.

And here we are, over seven years after its US launch, with Pokémon still alive and well. Granted it doesn't hold the same spot in the cultural limelight as it did in it's early years, but Pokémon continues to flourish, gaining new fans and expanding its fanbase every year. During a recent Pokémon event in New York, in which Nintendo offered a rare item known as the Mystic Ticket to game owners (see page 94 for our coverage of the event). The gargantuan line to download the ticket contained fans of all ages (many of whom have been fans since the early days of Pokémon), all waiting patiently for hours with GBA in hand for a chance to catch two rare Pokémon. Is it possible that the adults of the late '90s were wrong, considering how well they understood the phenomenon in the first place? Many a craze has come and gone, and usually the stronger they come, the harder they fall. Pogs, New Kids on the Block, Simpsons T-shirts—they're all resting peacefully in the graveyard of the overhyped. When the presumed time came for Pokémon to be ushered into oblivion, however, many fans simply continued to buy the games and keep the franchise alive.

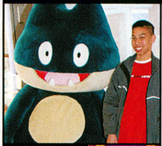
Strength in Numbers

While Pokémon's fanbase is generally younger than that of other RPGs', the games themselves are easily just as complex, if not more so. The original games boasted 151 unique Pokémon, 15 Pokémon Attack types, 15 Pokémon Defense types and 165 different Abilities. And the system only gained more depth as new games were released.

Games (North America)	# of New Pokémon
Red, Blue, Yellow:	151
Gold, Silver, Crystal:	100
Ruby, Sapphire:	134
FireRed, LeafGreen:	1
Total # of Pokémon to date:	**386**

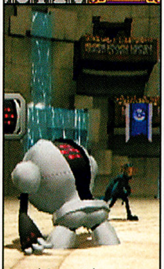
In the Beginning

Much has been written and said about the mysterious attraction of the Pokémon franchise. It truly is nothing short of extraordinary. The whole phenomenon began as a video game created by a small development team called Game Freak. Satoshi Tajiri, the creator of Pokémon and founder of Game Freak, created the incredible game based on his childhood obsession with collecting bugs. In Pokémon Red and Green (the first pair of Japanese games in the series), the main character travels from town to town collecting wild creatures called Pokémon to train and use in battle. The games contain over 150 Pokémon, each with unique characteristics and abilities. Because of the nature and complexity of the game, few expected Pokémon to succeed at all, let alone become an industry juggernaut. Even those involved in the development of Pokémon Red and Green were skeptical after the game's poor performance early on. "When the game development [for Red and Green] was completed," recalls Tsunekazu Ishihara (producer of the original games), "we were so satisfied with the outcome and thought it would probably sell around two million copies. On the contrary, the total number of the initial shipment [sold] only 230,000 copies [in Japan], which made us feel that our efforts had not paid off." While most games reach their highest sales stats during the first month after release, Pokémon Red and Green took a few months to get going, gradually gaining traction. Soon, the number of units sold began to creep into the millions, and Pokémon was quickly becoming a hit in Japan. Nintendo began to consider the idea of introducing Pokémon to North America.

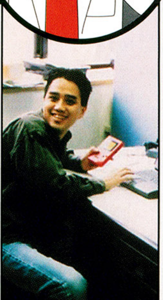


Pokémon Puzzle Challenge

NORMAL
SCORE
472
SPEED LV.
4
2:49



Pokémon Colosseum



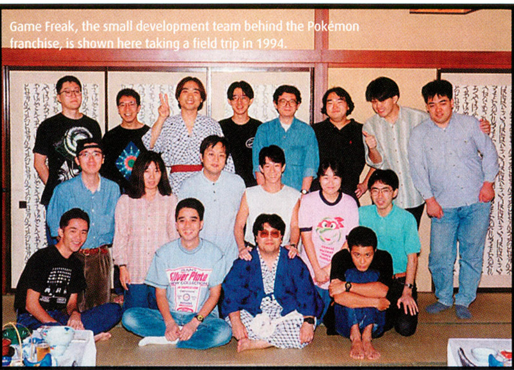
Satoshi Tajiri, Pokémon's creator, wanted his game to use the Game Boy Link Cable to trade Pokémon.

Nintendo had made a handful of forays into the RPG market with the Game Boy in Japan, and found that even if the games sold well there, they did not enjoy the same success in the North American market. "There had been a lot of attempts to get US consumers into [handheld] RPGs, and none of them had really taken off, so a [successful] Game Boy RPG seemed unlikely," says Gail Tilden, mastermind behind Nintendo of America's marketing of the Pokémon franchise on this continent. Tilden and her team orchestrated a marketing campaign that centered around three actions: collecting, trading and battling. "Kids need to want to have a lot of Pokémon in their collection in order to succeed," explains Tilden. Norman Grossfeld, president of 4Kids Productions (the company that launched the cartoon series in North America), suggested "Catch 'Em if You Can" to be Pokémon's official call to action. When Nintendo couldn't trademark the phrase, they settled on Grossfeld's second choice: "Gotta Catch 'Em All."

Coming to America

When the series was introduced to North America, it was already huge in Japan. There, the manga, the trading card game, the cartoon and the merchandise followed the release of the original Game Boy games. But when Nintendo launched Pokémon stateside, all of its facets hit the market simultaneously—a huge endeavor.

Kellogg's
LIMITED EDITION
Pokémon
Pokémon pop-tarts
WILD CHERRY



Game Freak, the small development team behind the Pokémon franchise, is shown here taking a field trip in 1994.

Fans pack the Landmark Plaza in Yokohama, Japan, for the opening of a Pokémon Center.

Rather than completely "westernizing" Pokémon, though, those involved in its North American localization made the bold decision to celebrate many of the Japanese attributes of the franchise. Even the name "Pokémon" sounds very Japanese (arguably more Japanese than the original Japanese name, which translated directly as "Pocket Monsters"). This is not to say that Pokémon was not altered at all on its way across the Pacific. Many of the character names changed, as did elements in a substantial chunk of the cartoon episodes. Some episodes did not air in the US at all because there were just too many Japan-US cultural clashes to avoid a controversy. Still, Nintendo of America consistently approached the growing franchise with a healthy respect for the Japanese culture that saturates the game and the cartoon. Some characters, for instance, were not changed at all from the Japanese versions, even if they had connotations that made sense only within the Japanese language. One of these characters, Pikachu (whose name derives from the Japanese sounds of lightning crashing and a mouse's squeak), ended up being the mascot for the entire franchise.

After much deliberation and a few legal hurdles, Pokémon completed its journey across the ocean and took North America by storm. To date, Pokémon Red and Blue (the North American equivalent of Red and Green) have sold over nine million units combined in North America alone.

Pokémon's reign in the media seemed never-ending, and in a way, it was. When the hype began to die down between 2000 and 2001, the games continued to sell. Since Pokémon's birth in Japan in 1996, Pokémon video games have sold well over 100 million units worldwide in just nine years. To put this number in perspective, consider the best-selling sports franchise of all-time: Madden NFL. The franchise has been in existence for 16 years, and has sold roughly 43 million units. In the gaming world of today, the games that sell the most units often have the biggest budgets and largest development teams. In the case of Pokémon, one man's labor of love became the best-selling video game franchise of all time. Somehow, somewhere, Pokémon struck a chord with consumers that let it break every rule in the business. Tatsumi Kimishima, former representative director of The Pokémon Company and current president of Nintendo of America, has this to say about the franchise's continued success: "I think Pokémon speaks to a child's interest in nature, plants and animals in a very natural way. Children naturally accept these wonders. [Pokémon] has attractive aspects such as collecting, trading and battling, but to be honest, there are other things that attract people to Pokémon that cannot be explained by words."

> **"There had been a lot of attempts to get US consumers into [handheld] RPGs, and none of them had really taken off, so a [successful] Game Boy RPG seemed unlikely."**
>
> **—Gail Tilden**

Understanding the Phenomenon

The word "phenomenon" brings to mind something that defies explanation. It's interesting that those in a position to take credit for the overwhelming success of the franchise are willing to recognize the indescribable attraction of the Pokémon world. Tilden notes that Pokémon "has an intangible quality."

For many older Americans, Pokémon brings to mind images of cute car-

POCKET MONSTERS
Pokémon
Nintendo

What's in a Name?

Ash's character went by the name Satoshi in Japan, named after Pokémon creator Satoshi Tajiri.

Gary, Ash's arch nemesis, was called Shigeru in Japan. You can guess who he was named after.

toon creatures and plush toys. What they may not realize is something that kids figured out a long time ago; something that Nintendo knows very well. In the words of Gail Tilden, "[Pokémon] is, at its base, a very good strategy/RPG video game." When we asked Kimishima which aspect of Pokémon is most responsible for its popularity, he said, "I have no question that the video game is the most responsible." Melinda Porter, who worked closely with Tilden to develop the US marketing campaign, notes, "The reason that Pokémon is around today is because it is so solid as a gaming concept." The entire Pokémon phenomenon can be traced back to Satoshi Tajiri's original idea to use Nintendo's Game Boy Game Link Cable to trade small creatures—it is the framework for the engine that Pokémon is based on. "I was struck with the possibilities of the new idea where players can exchange Pokémon characters in capsules through the Game Boy communication cable," explains Tsunekazu Ishihara (producer of the original Pokémon games) in regard to his first exposure to Tajiri's game concept. In his mind, "[the] in-depth structure of the game is the core of the Pokémon brand."

An obvious distinction between the original Pokémon games and other RPGs is the idea of splitting one game into two. The unconventional approach proved to be incredibly successful, and has been mimicked by many games since (Medabots, Mega Man Battle Network, Demikids, etc.). The concept originated with game guru Shigeru Miyamoto (creator of Mario and Donkey Kong). Ishihara recalls, "When the development of the first game was at the final stage, [Miyamoto] suggested releasing several types of games like this, in the form of the seven colors of the rainbow." With a burned-out development team nearing the project's five-year mark, and funds running low for Game Freak, Tajiri's team created just two games (Red and Green). That idea, coupled with Tajiri's other radical concepts of evolving and individualizing the Pokémon, laid the groundwork for what the Pokémon franchise would become. Says Ishihara, "In a sense, we are still trying to develop seven versions of the game."

Though the games have made the franchise what it is today, Pokémon has expanded far beyond an RPG series. For many fans, the cartoon series, the movies, the licensed merchandise, and spin-off games such as Pokémon Dash, Pokémon Channel and Pokémon Puzzle League are just as important as the core games. Ishihara's current company, Creatures Inc., is responsible for another important ingredient to Pokémon's long-term success: the Trading Card Game (TCG). The unique quality of TCG gameplay is that although it can be as simple as collecting baseball cards, it can also be quite complicated (as evidenced by the many tournaments that are held throughout the world). "[Young children] collect trading cards of their favorite Pokémon characters even if they don't

> **"The reason that Pokémon is around today is because it is so solid as a gaming concept."**
>
> —Melinda Porter

Hey You, Pikachu!

GAME BOY ADVANCE
Pokémon Pinball
RUBY & SAPPHIRE

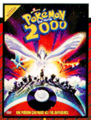
POKéMON PIKACHU

Pokémon Stadium
BATTLE YOUR POKéMON ON THE N64!

Pokémon Timeline

● indicates Japanese release date (all others are for North America)

Released as Pokémon Stadium in the US



1996

- Pokémon Red and Green - GB ● 2/27/96
- Pokémon Trading Card Game ● Fall '96
- Pokémon Blue - GB ● 10/15/96

1997

- Pokémon TV Show ● 4/1/97

1998

- Pokémon Pikachu ● 3/27/98
- Pokémon: Mewtwo Strikes Back! ● 4/18/98
- Pokémon Stadium - N64 ● 8/1/98
- Pokémon TV show - 9/8/98
- Pokémon Yellow - GB ● 9/12/98
- Pokémon Red and Blue - GB - 9/28/98
- Pokémon Pikachu - 11/2/98
- Hey You, Pikachu - N64 ● 12/12/98
- Pokémon Trading Card Game - GBC ● 12/18/98

1999

- Pokémon Trading Card Game - 1/99
- Pokémon Snap - N64 ● 3/1/99
- Pokémon Pinball - GBC ● 4/14/99
- Pokémon Stadium 2 - N64 ● 4/30/99
- Pokémon Pinball - GBC - 6/28/99
- Pokémon Snap - N64 - 7/26/99
- Pokémon: The First Movie - 11/6/99
- Pokémon Yellow - GB - 11/18/99
- Pokémon Gold and Silver - GBC ● 11/21/99

2000

- Pokémon Stadium - N64 - 3/6/00
- Pokémon Trading Card Game - GBC - 4/10/00
- Pokémon The Movie 2000 - 7/21/00
- Pokémon Puzzle Challenge - GBC ● 9/21/00

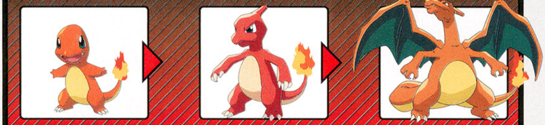
exactly know the official rules of the game, and they often play the game [using an] easier version of the rules," observed Ishihara after visiting a recent Pokémon event in Japan. Even for hard-core TCG players, the collecting and trading aspects are just as important as the game itself. Of all Pokémon's branches, TCG is probably the most successful at encouraging players to collect and trade, keeping it true to Tajiri's original concept.

The Future of Pokémon
The World of Pokémon is incredibly immersive. In most video game/cartoon franchises, the cartoon sets the stage for a game spin-off. But Pokémon is an anomaly in which everything seems to happen backward. In today's market, movie-based video games are more common than video game-based movies. But both often fail because the creators don't effectively capture the spirit of the original. It's hard to believe that two little Game Boy titles could spawn a successful cartoon series, movie series, trading card game and merchandising campaign. But it is not just the variety of consumer options that make Pokémon accessible on many different levels. Pokémon's goal has always been to allow you, the player, to assume the role of Trainer. And it goes far beyond merely informing you that you're the Trainer. Whether you're playing the card game or the video game, you're immersed in the world of Pokémon, collecting, trading and making decisions that will result in a completely unique experience. This concept is the backbone of the entire franchise.

Pokémon is a monolith in the entertainment industry, having stood the test of time and continuing to prosper. This summer, we'll even see a Pokémon theme park in Nagoya, Japan. With the new GCN game, Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness, and an onslaught of other games on the horizon, it is clear that Pokémon has no intention of changing course. And though the franchise has evolved over the years, bringing forth new types of games and new ideas, the spirit of the original has remained firmly embedded in every title. "I don't think anyone expected Pokémon to be this much of a success," recalls Ishihara. Kimishima agrees: "[Pokémon] is a bigger success than I could have ever imagined. This is a great pleasure for me as one of the people involved in this project. Perhaps such a success could only happen once every hundred years." Who knows? Maybe Pokémon will still be around 100 years from now.

The évolution

Like the series itself, Pokémon tend to evolve from small and cute into something much more powerful.



Pokémon Channel
too much!
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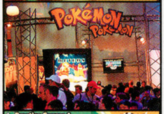
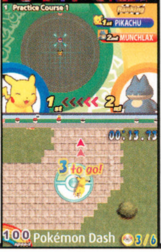
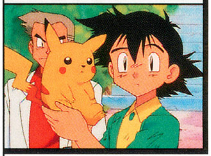
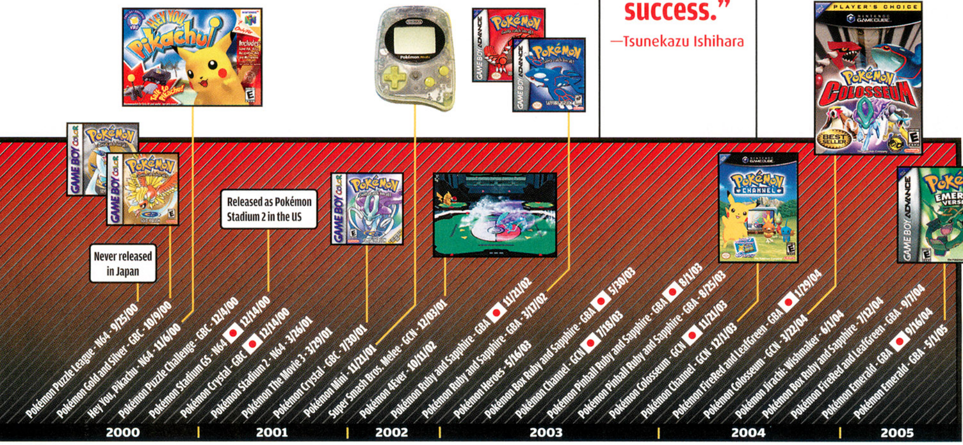



Pokémon Dash

T. Ishihara



"I don't think anyone expected Pokémon to be this much of a success."
—Tsunekazu Ishihara



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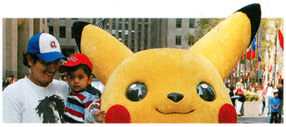
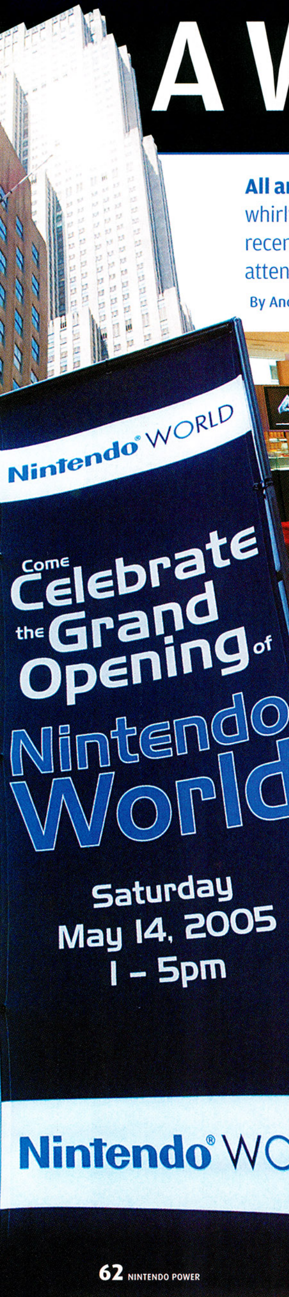
A WORLD APART

All around Rockefeller Center in New York City, a whirlwind of crowds and cars moves constantly. But recently, something new has been catching the attention of passersby.

By Andy Myers




Nintendo® WORLD
Come Celebrate the Grand Opening of Nintendo World
Saturday May 14, 2005 1 - 5pm
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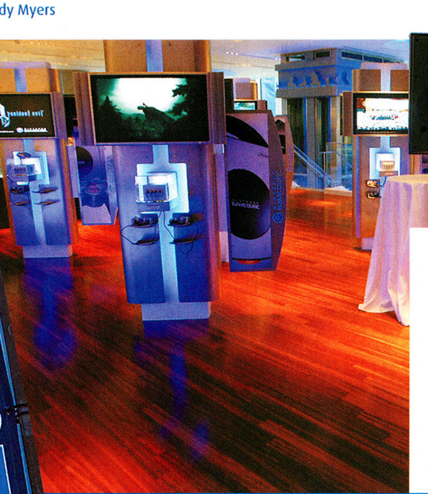


Nintendo WORLD

On May 14th, Nintendo World opened its doors to the patiently waiting throngs in front of Rockefeller Center. Nintendo World is where you'll find all things Nintendo—from the prototype NES to the latest GCN title. Much more than simply a retail outlet, it's also a museum of video game history, a trade show and a place for Nintendo enthusiasts to find rare swag. And it's just a cool spot to chill and play some games.

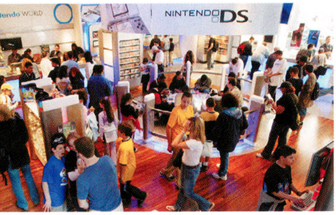
When you enter at street level, you'll find the Pokémon Center, a store within a store that encapsulates everything from Pokémon games to an interactive Pokédex kiosk. Collectible Pokémon figurines line the shelves, as does a huge selection of Pokémon TCG gear. Next to the Pokémon Center are scores of stations where customers can play the newest Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS games. The DS stations are set up for wireless competitions, so up to eight players can go head-to-head right there in the store. A GBA bar allows customers to sit down, pick up a GBA and choose from a long list of titles to play. The "gametender" will then load the requested game, without even expecting a tip!

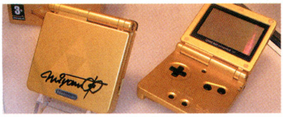
The second floor is where the Nintendo World experience really kicks into gear. At any of the many GCN stations, visitors can choose from a huge list of titles available on a custom-built gaming network connected to Nintendo of America's headquarters in Redmond, Washington, then play the selected game instantaneously. Three of the units have egg-shaped chairs that look like they came straight from the set of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. They're acoustically designed to block out noise from the outside world, and the built-in rumble effects and surround sound make for a gaming experience like no other.

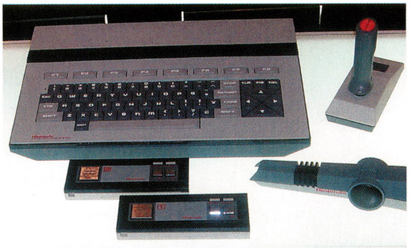
The upper level also contains a Nintendo Power wall, a whole lot of Nintendo and Pokémon merchandise, and a museum of video-game history. One of the coolest items on display is the Nintendo Advanced Video System (AVS), a prototype for the NES that was shown at a trade show in 1985, and was years ahead of its time. It is truly one of a kind. Also on display at the museum is a set of Hanafuda cards manufactured by Hiroshi Yamauchi (the great granddaddy of Nintendo) and a Game Boy that was severely charred from a blast in the first Gulf War and still works. Now that's quality hardware!

Nintendo WOR

emon Center
Nintendo WORL

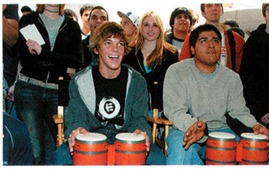






The Nintendo AVS hardware, on display in the Nintendo World museum, utilized infrared wireless technology for its two controllers, cassette deck, light gun and synthesizer—way back in '85. Wow!

At the grand opening, the winner of the Donkey Konga 2 competition played against skateboard boy wonder Ryan Sheckler in the final round.



The thousands of Nintendophiles from all over the country who attended the grand opening were rewarded handsomely. Nintendo filled Rockefeller Center with game stations, competitions and about a million other things to do. Though a Donkey Konga 2 competition was one of the day's largest events, many other "unofficial" competitions sprouted up all over the place, including some heated Super Smash Bros. Melee bouts. The event's MCs held a trivia contest that lasted for hours—every question was promptly answered by the incredibly knowledgeable attendees.

Many came to see the store and play the games, but the highlight of the event was definitely the Pokémon booth. For the first time in the United States, Nintendo made the Mystic Ticket available, enabling attendees to catch Lugia and Ho-oh in their Pokémon LeafGreen, FireRed and Emerald game paks (see the Community section for more details). The Mystic Ticket line seemed endless, and never let up all day. Pokémon specialists were available to answer questions and offer assistance regarding anything Pokémon-related.

Aside from the hype, the DJs and the competitions, what made the event special was the same thing that sets Nintendo apart from its competitors: the fans. Nintendo fans span a wide demographic, and are willing to travel across the country to get a glimpse of what Nintendo is up to. Just about everyone in Rockefeller Center was carrying a Nintendo DS and PictoChatting with other attendees. Some showed their devotion by wearing costumes of their favorite Nintendo characters. And while fans showed their appreciation to Nintendo, Nintendo definitely returned the favor, giving out hundreds of prizes and free gifts.

Surprisingly, Nintendo World is the first of its kind, and the only place on earth where you'll find so much Nintendo stuff in one place and available to the public. Nintendo World has special appeal to enthusiasts, but it offers something for everyone. The hard-core gamer will love the museum and the exclusive items (like the Legend of Zelda-branded GBA SP signed by Shigeru Miyamoto), and the casual gamer will have fun taking a break from the craziness of New York City and playing games in a laid-back and friendly environment.

Two nights before the store's grand opening, Nintendo hosted a party in Nintendo World. A slew of celebrities showed up, including *Law and Order's* Richard Belzer, Danny Masterson from *That '70s Show*, Steve Schirripa of *The Sopranos* and many others. Naughty by Nature even stopped by to play some games.

HISTORICAL LICENSE

Two highly decorated World War II franchises launch new campaigns this year. How do they stack up against each other and where do they draw the line between reality and gaming?

By George Sinfield

Guns, grenades and a girl—Medal of Honor: European Assault focuses on an OSS agent and his British squad.

WORLD WAR II RE-WON

Of all the conflicts of the past century, none has the resonance of World War II. It spanned every continent, affected almost every living person and involved unparalleled acts of good and evil.

The deep river of tragedy, victory and valor that flowed through the world in the late '30s through mid-'40s has filled EA's Medal of Honor and Activision's Call of Duty with a profound sense of reverence for those who experienced the war firsthand. Speaking about the men of the US Army's First Infantry Division, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One's executive producer Thaine Lyman said in a Nintendo Power interview, "Seeing where these guys have been and what they did really made it clear that they would be a great subject for us. We want people to understand that these guys were doing something really extraordinary. They were stemming the tide of global evil."

> **"We want people to understand that these guys were doing something really extraordinary."**

Both Big Red One, due out this fall, and Medal of Honor: European Assault, out now, follow single units through major battles beginning in 1942, when the US involvement in the war was in full swing. While the action titles have some substantial differences, they share a desire to give players an authentic WWII experience.

The D-day assault on Omaha Beach opened Medal of Honor: Frontline with the force of a two-megaton bomb in 2002. This year, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One pays homage to the battle that began the allied sweep through western Europe.

The War in Your Living Room

When history becomes entertainment

Captain Dale Dye met Steven Spielberg while working as a technical consultant on *Saving Private Ryan*. "Spielberg shared his vision of creating a video game that captured the cinematic feel and epic proportions of the film," Dye told Nintendo Power. The resulting game, the first in the Medal of Honor series, for which Dye offers a reality check, paved the way for a line of World War II first-person shooters. It's fitting that a filmmaker planted the seed because, like a good World War II movie, the games have their roots in realism but flourish as tightly designed pieces of entertainment.

"We try to be as realistic as you can be while preserving the fun of the gameplay," said Lyman. Both European Assault and Big Red One are centered on the most treacherous battles in the war, and EA's game offers known Nazi soldiers as boss enemies. Both also position you as a member of a squad. European Assault allows you to give basic directional orders to rotating squadmates, and rewards the members of the squad who survived each mission. In Big Red One, you don't have control over your squadmates, but the same group is with you for the whole game, aging and becoming more hardened as the war wears on.

Bullet Points

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

- ORIGINAL CINEMATIC STORY
- SQUAD-BASED CONTROL
- OPEN ENVIRONMENTS
- REAL LOCATIONS AND WEAPONS
- NEW ADRENALINE METER

CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

- FOCUS ON THE FIGHTING FIRST
- SQUAD COMBAT
- REAL OPERATIONS
- REAL LOCATIONS AND WEAPONS
- VEHICLE-BASED MISSIONS

TRENCH WARFARE

"In Big Red One, the whole thing is you're not this extraordinary superhero," said Lyman. " You're an ordinary soldier called on to do something extraordinary. You don't have some incredible ability that no one else on the screen has. You are one of many." That sense of being part of something that is larger than you is at the heart of what makes World War II a compelling setting. To immerse you in the war, the developers created allied and enemy AI behavior that follows the tactics used by the combatants. According to Lyman, "These things have evolved over time and we've tried to make sure that they are appropriate for the era, as well as for the nationalities that are using them."

No one fights alone in Big Red One. Every mission builds on the camaraderie between the troops.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"If you try to run and gun in this game, you will be shot, the same as you would in a real battlefield," Dye explained. The European Assault designers encourage players to find cover in open environments and practice the tactics that keep soldiers alive in real combat. They've also incorporated what Dye calls a "gut check" ("adrenaline" in the game), which mirrors real-life moments in which soldiers are able to focus fully on a task. When your Adrenaline meter is full, you can slow down the enemies and become invincible for a few seconds, "going above and beyond what you thought was physically possible and succeeding in your goal," as Dye put it.

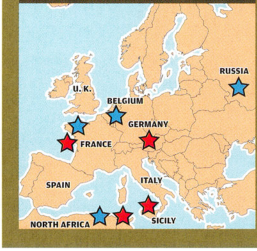
A longtime consultant for the Medal of Honor series, Captain Dale Dye appears in European Assault.

As the Adrenaline flows, you become more focused on your goal.

Road to Germany

By 1942, Nazi forces had spread throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. European Assault starts with the allied landing in St. Nazaire, France, and ends with the Battle of the Bulge, on the Germany-Belgium border. Big Red One covers the Fighting First's involvement in three major operations: Torch, Husky and Overlord.

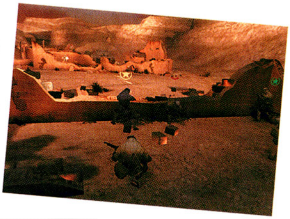
EUROPE AND BEYOND



Both games feature real-life conflicts that took place between 1942 and 1945. Said Call of Duty 2's creative director Christian Busic, "We asked where was the most intense stuff going on? And we built from there, out." On the map to the left, Big Red One locations are marked in red. European Assault locations are marked in blue.

GUNNING FOR REALITY

Combat is key in both titles, making the use of authentic weaponry hugely important. European Assault equips you with mission-specific ballistics, such as sniper rifles, shotguns and tank-denting bazookas. Big Red One offers guns specific to the individual armies.



Big Red One's development team acquired actual examples of each gun—even the-hard-to-find Vichy French weapons—for modeling, sound and physics tests. "We've re-created all of the actions, the way the bullet works, the way it reloads," boasted Busic. "The muzzle flashes of the guns look different depending on the time of day, as a real muzzle flash would. Shooting these guns in the game is the closest you're going to get to shooting them in real life."

Operation Overload

War is chaos. Soldiers on both sides of the conflict fill the field, attacking with overwhelming force. European Assault and Big Red One have mastered the rhythm of war with huge waves of combatants and explosions aplenty.

SITUATION NORMAL . . .

In war, there's only so much that you can plan for. The Big Red One team outfits the soldiers as they would be equipped for any battle. Explained Busic, "Historically speaking, you were as well equipped as [your commanders] expected things could go wrong for, which means that as things went more wrong than they had prepped you for, you'd run out of ammo." Both games allow you to grab weapons from downed soldiers. Busic continued, "You're not going to find an ammo box of American M1 ammunition in a German bunker. What you will find are German weapons and German ammunition. In many places through our levels, we also have supply trucks." The attention to detail helps you stay in the reality of the game.

> **"We want you to feel what it felt like to be on the battlefield. We want you to be afraid."**

The mission choice for each game also sustains reality. Although both titles center on fictional characters, the conflicts depicted are real. Dye described the battles in European Assault as being "the biggest and best battles fought within the European theatre of WWII."

The battles in Big Red One are ones in which the First Infantry Division played a large role. For example, during Operation Torch, "They stormed the beaches and took an airfield in Iran, allowing allied planes from Gibraltar that were running low on fuel to land," said Busic. "There were a few squadrons of planes with nowhere to go. They absolutely had to secure this base. We re-created that."

The tension that arises from each mission—the fate of the allied forces hanging in the balance—adds to the excitement that you get from any well-crafted FPS. "We want you to feel what it felt like to be on the battlefield," concluded Lyman. "We want you to be afraid. When the planes thunder by and the mortars start striking around you, we want you to get that experience, get that adrenaline rush that happens when you're surrounded by that kind of intensity."

On foot and in vehicles, Big Red One puts you in the boots of a member of the Fighting First.

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MAKE YOUR MOVE

Much more than arrows and grids, turn-based strategy games are forging a new path.

By Chris Shepperd

Turn-based strategy games can provide more replay value than any other video game genre. And with such an open framework for adding innovative features, every new game feels fresh and new. This month, we break down the finer points of the most highly anticipated turn-based strategy games of the year, and take a look at what makes them so darned good.

FOUR GAMES, WORLDS APART

Age of Empires: The Age of Kings

Throughout history, powermongers have made attempts to take over the world. Late this year, Majesco will give you the chance to do the same. In Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, your goal is to command an army with only one objective: total global domination.

Five different civilizations appear in Age of Empires. The Britons, Franks, Mongols, Saracens and Japanese represent a wide array of periods and cultures. Additionally, Age of Empires features over 45 types of units, from bowmen to samurai. Famous real and mythical figures such as Genghis Khan and Robin Hood are also playable.

Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance

Imagine the GBA Fire Emblem games, only bigger, better looking, more complex, longer and set in a completely different world. Path of Radiance shares its name, some of its fighting system and a little of its character design with the handheld versions, but otherwise expect a whole new experience.

What the Middle Ages lacked in the advancement of technology or culture, it made up for in the shaping of mythology. Fire Emblem embraces the swords-and-sorcery storytelling for which the medieval period is best known, and without all that messy plague to worry about.

Advance Wars: Dual Strike

Advance Wars is back, and better than ever. Dual Strike incorporates the campy, fast-paced feel of its GBA predecessors, then improves on the gameplay with all of the slick innovative features of the DS. Everything about Dual Strike is bigger and better than before—new modes, maps and challenges will put your army to the test.

MISSILE
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The 20th century was one of the most conflict-filled eras in the history of the world. To celebrate that dubious honor, Dual Strike delivers all of the tools of war available in the here and now, such as tanks and submarines.

Rebelstar: Tactical Command

In the year 2117, 30 is not a good age to be. The Arelian Empire, a race of aliens that restored peace and civility to Earth 70 years earlier, has changed its mind about the usefulness of its inhabitants—humans are getting snatched up on their 30th birthday. You play as Jorel, a young recruit in the rebel forces, and build an army to fight back against the evil Arelians.

Rebelstar might take place a hundred years in the future, but that doesn't mean your lowly rebel forces have all the latest technology. You'll have to build your strategy around a conventional arsenal of machine guns and grenades, then augment with laser rifles and other advanced weaponry.

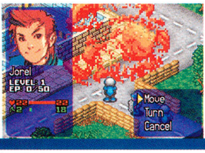
FANTASTIC FRANCHISES

Age of Empires has been a staple of the PC gaming world for many years and has a third installment on the way, plus several expansion sets already out on shelves. Age of Empires: The Age of Kings marks the franchise's first stab at the handheld market.

While America has only recently received a handful of Fire Emblem titles, FE is one of the longest-running franchises in Japan. The series has been around for over 10 years, going all the way back to the Famicom days. Fire Emblem characters did make an appearance in Super Smash Bros. Melee long before the FE games arrived on North American shores, however.

Advance Wars stands out as one of the premiere original franchises for the Game Boy Advance. The first Advance Wars game hit North American shores shortly after the GBA's launch. Two years later, Advance Wars launched another volley with Black Hole Rising.

Codo Technologies has been around for a long time in the PC world. They're responsible for the long-running X-Com series—turn-based strategy games very similar in concept and style to Rebelstar.



TRY THE LOCAL SPECIALTY

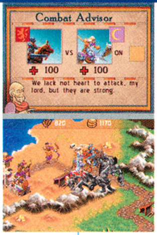
To keep your army properly trained, you'll have to devote time to researching new technologies, including ballistics and espionage. Over 50 different aspects of battle can be learned—what you choose to study will affect the path your troops take in battle.

You'll find tomes among the rewards reaped during battle and exploration. These tomes contain skills you can teach to characters, such as the ability to strike first, or to sneak past enemies. Characters can learn skills based on class, as well as how many skills they've already learned.

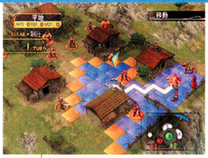
The DS has two screens, so why not use 'em both? In Advance Wars: Dual Strike, multiple battles can be going on simultaneously, such as skirmishes both in the air and on the ground. The two screens make it easy to keep track of the events of each melee.

Consider the gaming area like a third player—it can help you or hinder you, and it can change from turn to turn. This concept is at the heart of Rebelstar—both you and your opponents can use the cover of doorways and bunkers for defense, then blow them up to forge new paths.

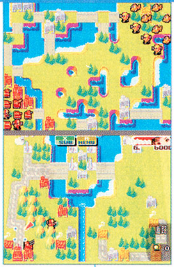
MAKING THE CONNECTION



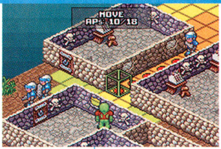
Up to four players can match up wirelessly in multiplayer-specific scenarios, each competing for global domination.



Owners of the GBA Fire Emblems rejoice—when you load up your game paks and connect your GBA to the GCN version, you'll not only unlock new maps, but also character renders specific to the GBA game you have inserted.



Ask any fan of Advance Wars why he loves it so much, and he's likely to mention the strong multiplayer functionality. Dual Strike makes it even easier to design your own maps, due largely to the convenience of the touch screen. Once you've finished your map, you can challenge up to three opponents in wireless competition.



With Rebelstar's Multiplayer Hotseat mode, you can play against a challenger with only one GBA—just hand it off after every turn. You can also play head-to-head in Link mode, avoiding having to touch your opponent's sweaty handprints.

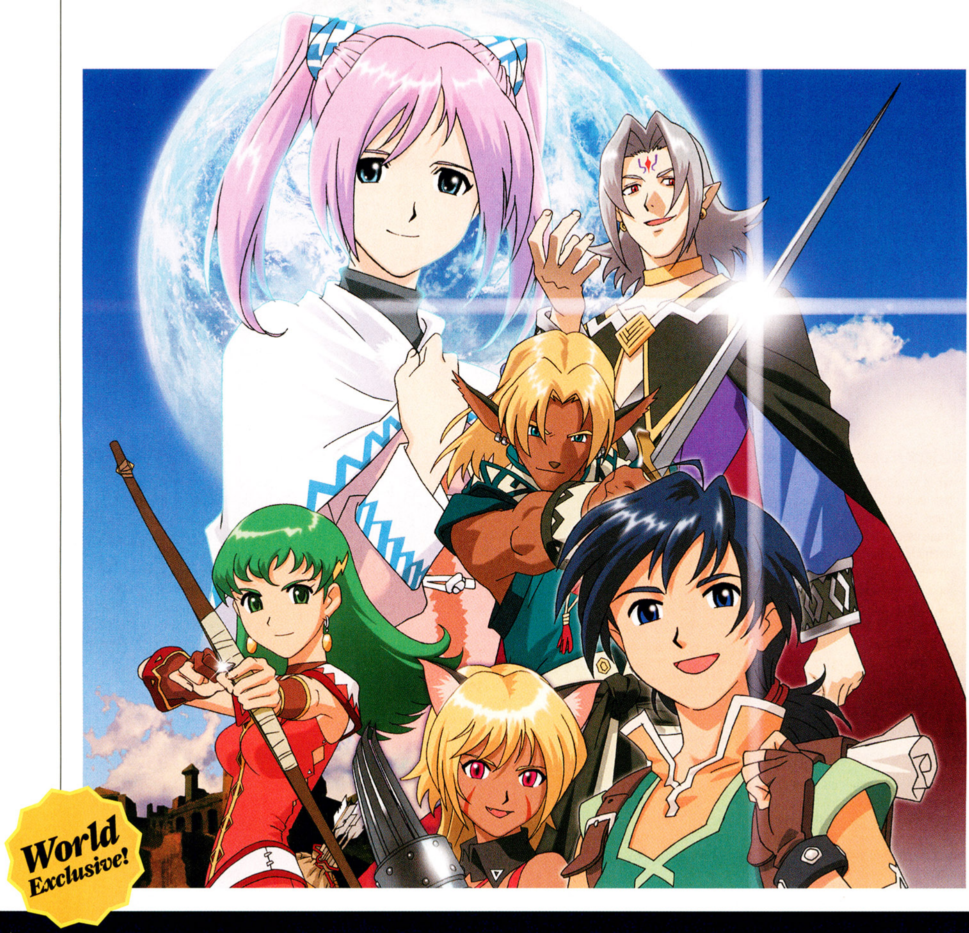
GREAT OR GIMMICK?

The Age of Empires series on the PC has always played in real time. The DS version will switch the format to a turn-based system, and tap a number of DS-exclusive features like touch-screen troop movement and wireless multiplayer. PC veterans should quickly recognize the similarities to mouse movement and LAN play, but the question remains whether they'll dig the whole new gameplay method.

Beyond the traditional unit-by-unit troop movement typical of turn-based games, you can issue general commands to your troops. Strategy-game players are notoriously meticulous, so shortcuts like these may end up being seldom used.

Want to know how many troop carriers you've built? How about the number of turns you've taken? Stat geeks will love Dual Strike's elaborate history section, which keeps track of virtually everything you've done in the game, but most gamers won't think twice about the enormous amount of data it collects.

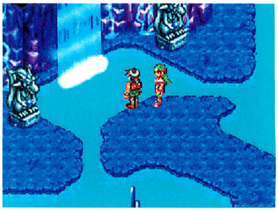
Battles can get pretty chaotic—it might be hard to remember everything that happened. Fortunately, Rebelstar lets you review the events of your opponent's last turn. It can help out while you're still learning the ropes, but if you're paying attention, you probably won't forget any details.


World Exclusive!

NEW BEGINNINGS

An exclusive look at the first **original Lunar saga** in over a decade.

By Steve Thomason



For the majority of the 16-bit era, the Super NES dominated the role-playing realm with the backing of genre behemoth SquareSoft. In 1993, however, Game Arts, one of Sega's closest allies at the time, answered with a character-driven epic for the Sega CD entitled Lunar: The Silver Star. Though it never became the household name that Final Fantasy did, Lunar cultivated a rabidly enthusiastic fan base. A sequel, Lunar: Eternal Blue, followed soon after, but fans have had to make do with remakes of those original tales ever since. That will finally change this summer when Ubisoft releases the first all-new Lunar in over 10 years—Lunar: Dragon Song for the Nintendo DS.

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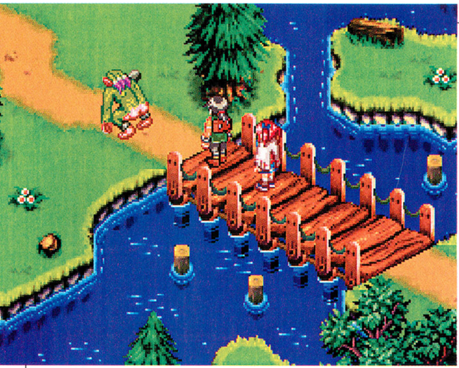
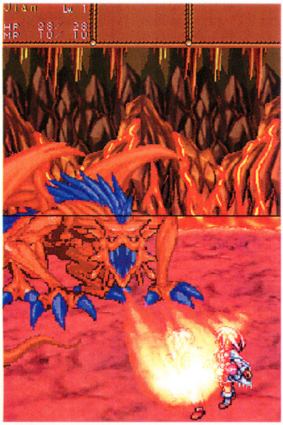


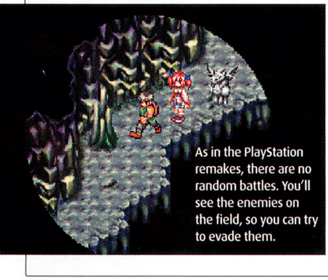
Set 1,000 years before The Silver Star (hence the game's working title, Lunar: Genesis), Dragon Song takes place at a time in Lunar's history when beastmen are the dominant race and occupy a grand city at the center of the world. Humans, by contrast, live a simple existence in the countryside. Under the protection of Althena, the goddess who brought life to Lunar, the two races have long enjoyed a peaceful coexistence. When Althena's power mysteriously begins to wane, however, a tribe of black-magic users arises in the Frontier, the desolate land at the outskirts of civilization. Rumor has it that this vile tribe has captured the goddess. With the Dragonmaster (the hero charged with protecting Althena) nowhere to be found, a human boy named Jian takes it upon himself to travel to the Frontier and rescue the goddess. What he finds there will set into motion an unexpected series of events that will change Lunar forever.

Lunar devotees will notice some significant changes in the latest game's visual presentation. While you're exploring towns and dungeons, an isometric view replaces the series's traditional top-down perspective, and battles are viewed from behind the party rather than from the side. In addition, characters are no longer portrayed in the typical RPG "superdeformed" style (i.e., short and stocky, with huge heads). Not everything is different, however; as fans can see from the beautiful art on the preceding page, series veteran Toshiyuki Kubooka is once again in charge of character design.

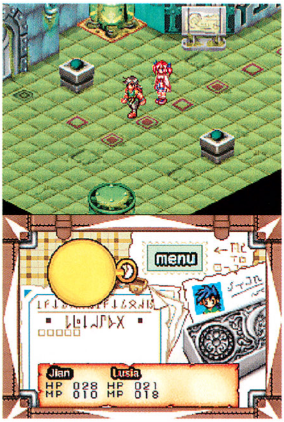
Battles are turn-based, with a dual-screen display that allows for larger sprites. Though you'll attack foes the old-fashioned way, with weapons and items you've equipped, Battle Cards you find during your quest will alter your party's powers and abilities. There's also a new light and dark system that requires you to transform dark enemy creatures into beings of light (though exactly how that's accomplished is unclear at this point).

Judging from what we've seen so far, Lunar: Dragon Song seems to be in good hands. JAM, one of the companies that collaborated on the PlayStation remakes, is handling development on the title, and Game Arts is overseeing the entire project to ensure that it lives up to fans' expectations.





As in the PlayStation remakes, there are no random battles. You'll see the enemies on the field, so you can try to evade them.



Man on the Moon

Hungry for more information, we interviewed Dragon Song scenario writer Mitsuru Takahashi about Lunar's past, present and future. Read on for some juicy revelations.

Nintendo Power: What's the team been up to since Lunar: Eternal Blue? What other games have you worked on?
Mitsuru Takahashi: Since Lunar: Eternal Blue, we've been busy working on Lunar Legend for the Game Boy Advance, Phantasy Star I & II for the PlayStation 2, and more.

NP: Can you tell us a bit about how this project came about and how the Lunar franchise was resurrected after all this time?
MT: We felt the time was right for a new Lunar installment for the fans, and it was also a great opportunity to partner with Ubisoft to create the first original Lunar game in over 10 years.

NP: Was it difficult to jump back into the Lunar universe, or was it something the team had been anxiously awaiting?
MT: Of course. We had some ideas about a new Lunar game, and now we've realized our initial idea to make this game. We also already have ideas about the sequel to Lunar: Dragon Song.

NP: Why did you decide to make the game for the Nintendo DS? How does it take advantage of the system's unique capabilities?
MT: Even though Lunar is a well-known game, I thought it was time to introduce Lunar to a new generation. The Nintendo DS is perfect for this purpose. The monster battles shown with two screens are very unique, as the monsters show up on both screens.

Another exclusive feature is card battles with the wireless LAN function. You can also escape from a battle by shouting at the screen using the Nintendo DS microphone.

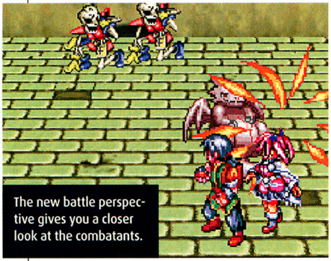
NP: Which members of the original Lunar team are working on Lunar: Dragon Song? Is Mr. Iwadare composing the soundtrack, for instance?
MT: Almost all of the original team members are working on Lunar: Dragon Song, but we are using a different sound company this time.

NP: The Lunar series has always placed a lot of importance on narrative and character development. Are you putting the same emphasis on those elements with the new game?

MT: The basic concept is still the same. However, due to the unique features of the DS, you might find this game plays very differently from other RPG games.

NP: The previous console titles boasted fantastic anime-style cut-scenes. Will you be able to do something similar on the DS?
MT: Yes, of course, and not only for important scenes, such as when each character shows up for the first time, but there are also many "character play" cut scenes in the game.

NP: What links does this game have to previous games in the series?
MT: This game shares the same story background as the previous Lunar series. The goddess Althena, the Dragonmaster, Four Dragons, etc. You can see glimpses of "Lunar" everywhere in this game.


The new battle perspective gives you a closer look at the combatants.

NP: The tale of Dragonmaster Dyne and the original Four Heroes seems perfectly suited to a prequel. Why not tell that story?
MT: This game is the genesis of Lunar. The story of the original Four Heroes is between Lunar: Dragon Song and The Silver Star. And to tell you a secret . . . the next Lunar game will most likely be about the Four Heroes.

NP: What would you say are the themes of Lunar: Dragon Song?
MT: "What is the most important to humans?" "What is the most important to Jian?" I think those are the themes of Lunar: Dragon Song.

NP: Ghaleon sort of tied the series together until now. Since Lunar: Dragon Song takes place 1,000 years prior to The Silver Star, he obviously won't play a role in this game. What elements would you say now tie the series together?
MT: The themes of this game are the presence of Althena, who keeps transmigrating, and her personal anguish. Also, what can lead people: power or faith? This is an eternal theme of the Lunar series.

NP: What can you tell us about the battle system?
MT: Basically it is a command-type battle system. The auto battle function is very easy. We tried to keep the command-input system as simple as possible, and we tried to incorporate many unique features in the game. For instance, unlike other RPG games, the "Defense" command doesn't exist in this game. Also, we replaced the "Escape" command with voice recognition. Another interesting feature is aerial battles. With two screens, you battle against monsters on the ground and in the air at the same time. However, it doesn't mean you have to select many more commands. (Actually, you don't have to specify which monster to fight in this game.) The game automatically checks equipped weapons, player character status and monster status, and it determines ground battle or aerial battle. This way, the player can focus on battles and enjoy a variety of battles.

NP: Are you aiming the game more toward hardcore Lunar fans, or a new audience?

MT: Both. This game not only has a game design and scenario that the existing Lunar fans can understand and enjoy, but there are unique DS features to draw new fans, as well.

NP: Any chance we'll ever see a sequel to either The Silver Star or Eternal Blue?
MT: I believe you will see it in the future. However, we will need huge support from all of the fans who have supported the Lunar world.

> **"What can lead people: power or faith? This is an eternal theme of the Lunar series."**

NP: Anything else you want to tell us about the game or that you'd like our readers to know?
MT: Let's nurture this newly created Lunar world together. Let's take the first step into the Lunar: Dragon Song world together. I want you to respect this new Lunar game as much as the past Lunar series. What I learned from Jian is, "The person himself is not strong. People and the things that the person wants to protect make him strong."

HISTORY

Lunar 101

A brief guide to the important people, places and things in Lunar lore.

The Blue Star

The people lived on the Blue Star before Althena brought them to Lunar. She was forced to destroy all life on the Blue Star to seal away the dark god Zophar.

The Four Heroes

A legendary group of heroes led by Dragonmaster Dyne saved Lunar from an evil demigod prior to the events of The Silver Star.

Althena

After the triumph of the Four Heroes, the goddess decided to be reborn as a human. At The Silver Star's conclusion, she sacrificed her powers permanently and remained human until her death.

Dragonmaster

The Dragonmaster controls the power of the Four Dragons and protects Althena. In The Silver Star, a young boy named Alex became the last Dragonmaster and defeated Ghaleon.

Ghaleon

Ghaleon was one of the Four Heroes and Dyne's closest companion. Feeling that Althena had forsaken the people of Lunar by becoming human, Ghaleon attempted to replace the goddess as Lunar's ruler. To atone for his sins, he helped defeat a resurrected Zophar in Eternal Blue.

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PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES
August 2005, Volume 194

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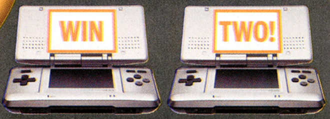

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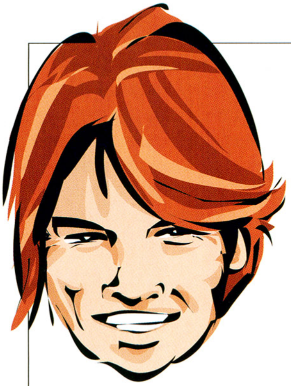

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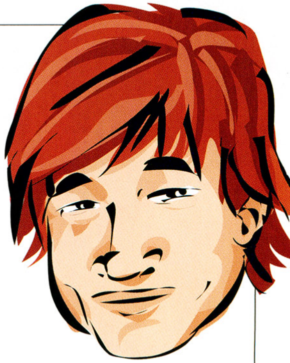


MASAHIRO SAKURAI
FREELANCE GAME DESIGNER

TAKESHI HIRAI
DIRECTOR,
Q ENTERTAINMENT

By Steve Thomason

Meteos is the latest addiction to grip the NP mothership, but we managed to pry ourselves away from the game long enough to chat with two of its creators.

Nintendo Power: How did this collaboration between Mr. Sakurai and Q Entertainment get started?

Masahiro Sakurai: I was approached by Q Entertainment to make a falling-block puzzle game.

Takeshi Hirai: Speaking for Q Entertainment, our objective was to have a puzzle game; a game that is casual and included multi-play. Also, we emphasized communication. At that point, Mr. Sakurai had just left his previous company and became a freelancer. The timing was perfect, so we asked Mr. Sakurai to create this for us.

NP: How did it come about that Nintendo decided to publish the game in North America?

MS: First of all, this game is a block puzzle game, although it is very different from a Tetris game. By just looking at articles in magazines and at screenshots, you can not really distinguish the difference between a conventional block game and Meteos. So when trying to communicate that difference to the users in Japan, we had demo versions that were downloadable at various spots. The publisher able to do that kind of thing [in North America] was Nintendo. That is why we selected Nintendo for the North American version.

> “I've heard stories that many people, when they play Meteos, [have] a similar sensation as when they played Smash Bros.”

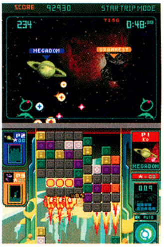
TH: And there is a second reason. In Japan, it was released by Bandai. For the North American release, we actually got an offer from Nintendo saying that they thought it was a great game.

NP: With all of the different aliens and planets, there's a lot more personality in Meteos than in most puzzle games. Was that important to the team to separate it from other titles?

MS: This game places a lot of emphasis on the multi-play mode, and the same could be said for Super Smash Bros. In that game, playing with different characters makes it more fun. In Meteos, you can use different planets and different items. If you play Mario vs. Mario in a Smash Bros. game, it may be fun, but when you want to attack your opponent's weak points it's much more fun to use a different character.

NP: Was Mr. Sakurai's experience with Super Smash Bros. helpful in making the multiplayer experience in Meteos more compelling?

MS: You can't necessarily compare these two games since their genre is completely different. So in terms of



know-how, I wasn't really able to use my prior experience. However, I've heard stories that many people, when they play Meteos, [have] a similar sensation as when they played Smash Bros. I think why they felt that was because the creator's personality is reflected in both games.

NP: What are your thoughts on the DS hardware?

MS: I was involved in game development for the

LAYAZERO
ZERO

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> **"Thinking of games in the traditional sense closes the door on new experiences."**

GameCube and consoles prior to the GameCube. I had various chances to make proposals to the developers and one thing I always mentioned was to be able to have quick access within the menu; to be able to select things really quickly. I've always had that thought, and when I was planning Smash Bros., I included something like that in my plans. I think what is important is to have the players' thoughts be communicated to the device as quickly as possible. In other words, to have intuitive control over the game. In that respect, I think the touch screen serves a very vital role and I think it's a very good function for the DS.

TH: I was working at Sega before, and Sega makes arcade cabinets. When you go to an arcade, you can see that there are various types of interfaces. You can drive, you can drum, etc. When you look at the home consoles, they're basically just the control pad. Recently they added the analog stick, but there haven't been any drastic changes to the interface. Mr. Mizuguchi always talks about the five senses and with the Nintendo DS, you can actually touch what you see. In that respect, the DS has huge possibilities.

NP: Mr. Sakurai is known for creating very addictive games; games that people continue to play for a long time. Do you intentionally approach development with that in mind, and why do you think your games have been so successful in that regard?

MS: What I feel about computers is that their capabilities are really limited. In order to have a game be fun for a long time and have in-depth gameplay, you need to have, at some point in the game, the intervention of people. In Smash Bros., rather than playing alone, it's much more fun to play with a human opponent. I think that is one thing that lets people play a single game for a long time. Plus, when you gather different personalities, that also contributes to in-depth gameplay. I always focus on how to stimulate that human emotion of playing with each other. In Meteos you can see the same thing. We have 90 different planets, and people with different personalities can choose their own planets to interact with each other.

NP: Mr. Iwata has talked a lot about the importance of innovation going into the next generation of consoles. What are your thoughts on that subject?

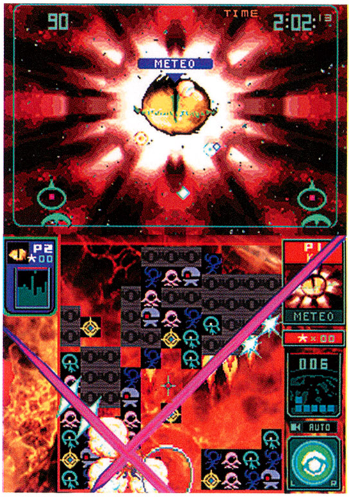
TH: Right now, Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo are all competing to own market share with their next-generation consoles. All three of these consoles could be extremely expensive, and that element is a very high obstacle for new users to enter the market. One concern is how companies can overcome this obstacle in the future.

MS: Thinking of games in the traditional sense closes the doors on new experiences. Right now on the E3 floor, you can see very similar kinds of FPS games. Each year, it's the same kind of games on the floor. It seems that the market is not willing to accept new things. Nintendo creates games that are not exactly games, and I relate to that. What I think is important is to let in something external. For instance, when you look at Nintendogs—dogs already exist outside the game world, but they've been incorporated into games. Another example is Electroplankton. It was developed by Toshio Iwai, who is outside of the game industry. I think it's important to import some outside sources into the game industry.

NP: Can you tell us anything about your plans or what types of games you'd like to work on in the future?

MS: Because I've become a freelancer, my possibilities have increased significantly. If outside companies want me to develop something in a series, I would do that. Also, if they want me to create games of various genres, of course, I'd like to accept that challenge as well.

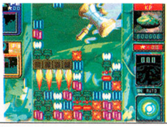
TH: For Q Entertainment, we emphasize communication. We think that communication is the most important thing. If there are chances to create something that has to do with communication besides games, we would like to try that as well.



STRATEGY

THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE

Masahiro Sakurai's games always boast tons of replay value, thanks in large part to the abundance of unlockables he crams into them. His latest attempt to suck away your leisure time is no different. All of the Meteos that you launch into space during any of the game's play modes are added to your collection. Once you've acquired enough blocks of a certain type (or types), you can fuse them together to create new planets, soundtracks and weapons.



Additional extras become available if you meet the requirements listed to the right.

Requirement	Unlockable
Clear the Straight route for the first time	Planet Grannest
See the true ending for the Straight route	Cross Bomb
Clear the Branch route for the first time	Planet Anasaze sound set
See four endings for the Branch route	Planet Freaze sound set
See all seven endings for the Branch route	Planet Vubble
Clear the Multi route for the first time	Fury Hammer
See the true ending for the Multi route	Planet Layazero
Score 50,000 points in a 2:00 Time War	Planet Bavoom
Score 100,000 points in a 5:00 Time War	Smoke Screen
Finish a 100-Meteo War in 10 seconds or less	100 Air, Fire, H_2O and Soil Meteos
Finish a 1,000-Meteo War in 3:00 or less	Planet Layazero sound set
Play for an hour	Planet Cavious sound set
Play for five hours	Planet Florias
Play three wireless matches	100 Iron, Zap, Zoo and Herb Meteos
Launch 10,000 or more Meteos	Planet Brabbit sound set
Get another player's profile	Planet Jeljel
Get five other players' profiles	Eraser
See eight endings	Planet Meteos can be fused

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- **STATISTICS** for all characters and classes in the game, including one unlocked in Creature Campaign
- **COMPREHENSIVE DATA** for all characters, classes, weapons and items
- **DETAILED TIPS** for the Tower of Valni, Lagdou Ruins and all monster skirmishes

CHAPTER 5 THE EMPIRE'S REACH

ALLIES: 9

OBJECTIVE: DEFEAT SAAR

Eirika and her party press on, hoping for any news of Prince Ephraim. Upon reaching Serafew, the once peaceful common ground between Renais and Grado, Eirika is begged for help by a young Cleric named Natasha. Having just escaped from Grado, Natasha holds vital information regarding her emperor's motives for attacking Renais. Saar, Grado captain of the Serafew border guard, has other plans for Natasha.

RECOMMENDED CLASSES
KNIGHT
PALADIN
PEGASUS KNIGHT
PRIEST
MAGE
CAVALIER

NEW MEMBERS
JOSHUA
NATASHA

A NEW RECRUIT

The most difficult part in the battle for Serafew is recruiting Joshua. On your first turn, have Vanessa rescue Natasha, and then move them out of harm's way. After the rest of your party successfully lures some of the guards surrounding Joshua away, land Vanessa off to the right near the houses and drop Natasha off. On the very next turn, have Natasha move in and speak to Joshua. As soon as he's recruited, Joshua should rescue Natasha and return her to safety.

Arena Battles

Arena battles can earn you much money and experience—don't miss the opportunity. Clear the field except for the boss, then test stronger party members, such as Seth, in the arena. If the battle isn't going your way, tap the B button to exit—you'll lose money but leave with your life.

Draw Them In

Immediately send Seth and another strong party member east to cut off the two reinforcements. Once they're taken care of, position your group near the town gate and let them come to you. Be sure not to draw in Joshua, though—he's your enemy until recruited by Natasha.

BOSS: SAAR

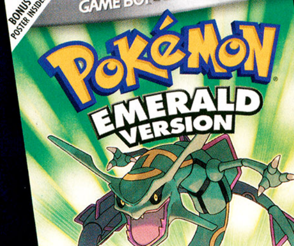
Saar, a level 8 Knight, will wait in the Northeast corner until you approach him. Pick up the Armorslayer in the nearby village and equip it to Eirika—Saar will fall easily to this weapon.

RECRUIT: JOSHUA

Joshua is a Mercenary working for Grado, and can only be persuaded to join your party by the lovely Natasha. Joshua will prove to be a powerful and dangerous ally, specializing in critical attacks.

30 NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDE

Also look for...



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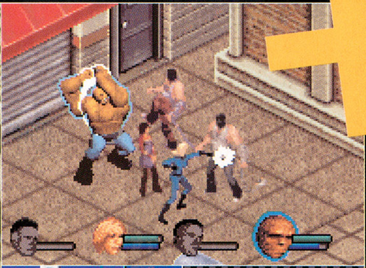
EA's stealthy Batman Begins emphasizes fear. Should you run away or come closer?

80
The Battle of the Bulge. How much is too much in EA's European Assault?



17 game reviews and a look back at the last 12 months.

REVIEW ARCHIVES BEGIN ON PAGE 86

82
Sonic speed and smooth touch control make Kirby's DS debut a doozy.

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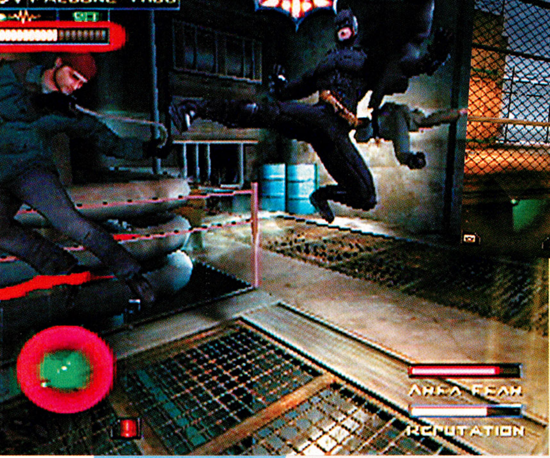
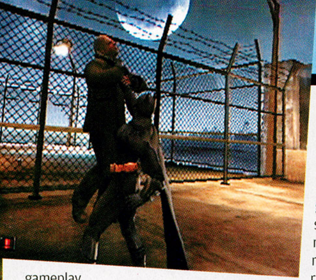
84
There's nothing puzzling about Meteos's appeal.





TROUBLE IN GOTHAM

KNIGHT FALLS

BATMAN BEGINS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **Eurocom/Electronic Arts**
ESRB: **Teen**

Given the amount of material that has been produced to augment the Batman universe, it's surprising to see the lack of inspiration in Batman Begins. Batman's repertoire of gadgets, vehicles and stiffly performed martial arts have given rise to more adaptations than virtually any other comic book character ever. That's not to say that a new adaptation is needed here, but just that it's possible to think outside the box when it comes to Batman. However, it's obvious from the outset of the game that the developer had little intention of taking the Dark Knight anywhere beyond where his most recent movie made him go. In fact, Batman's roots as a comic book character seem virtually overlooked—the game is purely a movie adaptation, and doesn't include any more from the Batman world than the movie does.

The game Batman Begins takes only a few hours more to complete than the movie does to watch—even with rising movie ticket prices, you're still getting a quantitatively better per-hour bang for your buck in the cinema than you are playing the video game. The game comes off as little more than a cog in the marketing machine for the movie. Producers should either give people a lasting, fun experience with the game, or give the game to them cheap so they know where to set their expectations. But Batman Begins isn't the only franchise to receive this treatment—this same thing has occurred with other movie licenses plenty of times (read: *Spider-Man* and *The Matrix*).

But it's not all bad. The producers made good choices about what elements to take from the movie. The fear motif is always front and center, almost to a fault, but the message is consistent. The character modeling for all of the key roles is strong, particularly Michael Caine's Alfred and Morgan Freeman's Lucius Fox—both characters' digital models look eerily close to the real thing. Unfortunately, Christian Bale's voice acting is a little over the top—most of his lines are delivered as if he's yelling with laryngitis. It's missing the ironic calmness that Batman often portrays. The ornate images of Gotham city in the background of outdoor levels look ominous and brooding, although you seldom feel like you're actually *in* Gotham; you're always on the outskirts.

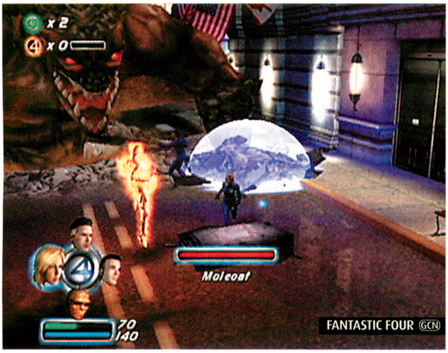
Once the stage is set for the actual game, the real problems happen. The strict adherence to the movie script is to be expected, particularly in determining level locations and plot directives, but that doesn't mean that the game experience needs to be mundane. The gameplay situations all run the same way—simple acrobatic moves like pipe-crawling and wall-scaling get you into new areas of a level, where you encounter a group of thugs against whom you are outmatched. You look around for an alternate route into their hideout, stealthily set off a distraction that for some reason makes the enemies drop their guns, then fight them on more even terms. The recipe is repeated so often that by the end of this disappointingly short game, it already feels stale. The environments themselves offer little variation, either—you feel like a developer's marionette, hopping from one platform to the next, never being asked to explore alternative routes or methods.

You have several devices at your disposal, presumably to give the game a more stealthy appeal, but they fall way short of their counterparts in other stealth-based games. For example, your electrohack tool for breaking into computers is not only way too simple; it almost never changes from one hack to the next. The same goes for picking door locks—every single door is apparently exactly the same in Gotham. Batman would be better off just getting a key made. The optic-cable-under-the-door trick serves no purpose, either. The on-screen radar lets you know where the bad guys are and which way they're facing long before you get near the door they're behind. All of these issues highlight a real problem—the game asks you to act stealthy when you don't really need to. You are never in any danger or rush to pick a lock or hack into a computer, meaning the game puts little if any pressure on you to do well when performing these tasks.

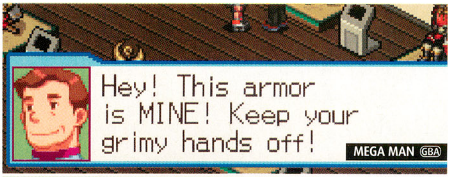
The driving levels are enjoyable, but they're very short and there's virtually no way to lose at them. You aren't penalized for ramming civilian vehicles, and your tanklike Batmobile can take plenty of abuse, meaning it's a straight shot from the beginning to the end. A reasonably skilled player can make it through the vehicular levels on the first try. The developers tried to infuse a little replay value by offering time trials of these levels once you've beaten them, but there is little point. The driving levels are fun—but they're not *that* fun.

This game is intended for people who are either really into Batman or who, after seeing the movie, want to get a first-hand experience of playing as the Caped Crusader. It's not for the hard-core gaming audience, and it probably never was at any point in development. That's really too bad, because the table is set for a strong, gamer-oriented title. Activision's X-Men Legends and VU Games' The Hulk were able to do so, so it's definitely possible. We're crossing our fingers that the next Batman title lets us play the comic book hero like we really want to. —**Chris S.**

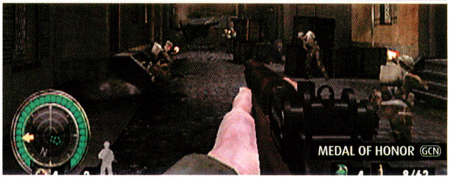
The cape we can understand, but the pointy ears?



FANTASTIC FOUR GCN



MEGA MAN GBA


MEDAL OF HONOR GCN

FANTASTIC FOUR

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Activision**
DEVELOPER: **7 Studios**
ESRB: **Teen**

One reason for the Fantastic Four's 40-plus years of popularity is the team's great mix of superpowers—flexibility, invisibility, brute force, pyrotechnics—they've got it all. Variety is the key ingredient of the Fantastic Four film's origin-story game adaptation, too. As the members of the team work solo or in groups, you control them one at a time (or two at a time if you're playing co-op with a partner) and knock back Dr. Doom's endless supply of thugs and robots. Victories earn you points that you can use to upgrade each hero's nine special moves.

The drawbacks are that the gameplay is basic button-mashing, and you can get past most enemies (in Medium difficulty) with standard attacks—no superpowers needed—making the crime-fighting quartet something less than fantastic. —**George S.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE OF E3?

We've got one eye on this month's releases, and another on the games that were revealed at E3 for release later this year. We all know that The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess made perhaps the biggest splash at the show, but what else made our reviewers stop and ponder this year? We asked. They answered.

STEVEN GRIMM

Ever since the Metroid Prime Hunters demo debuted a touch mode that echoed FPS mouse control, I've wondered if some PC series could now go DS—the unveiling of Black & White Creatures answered my prayers.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

I'm going to play only the DS from now on. I was wooed by the graphics of games such as Mario Kart, but I'm more excited about how developers are using the DS's features, such as in games like Lost in Blue.

ANDY MYERS

The crazy-fun mayhem of The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction caught me off guard. While playing the E3 demo, I kept wondering why no one had made this game before.

GEORGE SINFIELD

While considering gameplay and control, playing prerelease discs that have titles scrawled in felt-tip pen on them, I don't think about gaming as a style statement. Game Boy Micro shined a light on that world for me.

STEVE THOMASON

I couldn't believe how many great titles were on display for the DS. I've always been more of a console man, so the fact that I'm excited about so many handheld games definitely caught me by surprise.

MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 5

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Capcom**
DEVELOPER: **Capcom**
ESRB: **Everyone**

This is the third game in the series to come as a pair. Add that to the first two Mega Man Battle Network games, and the series is quickly on its way to double digits. That's not *bad*, considering. Considering they've all been released within the past four years. Considering the characters, setting, battle system and premise have hardly changed, either. Not bad. That's not to say that the most recent pairing, MMBN 5: Team Protoman and MMBN 5: Team Colonel, are bad games—on the contrary, they are just as good as, if not a tad better than, their predecessors. They're just not any *different*. For those who haven't had the opportunity to experience at least a sampling of the franchise, there's no time like the present—the muddy story and unique battle system don't require you to know a thing about the games that came before them. — **Chris S.**

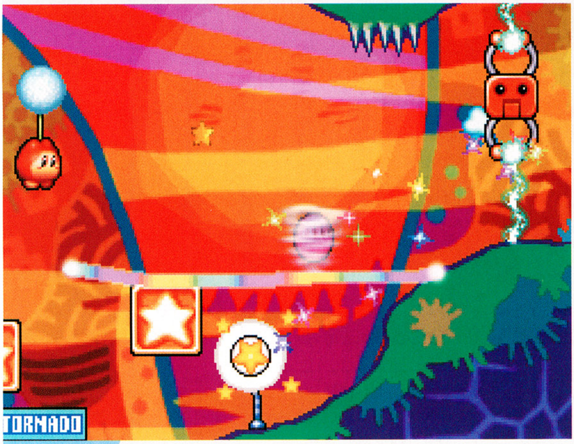
MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **EA Los Angeles**
ESRB: **Teen**

The storyline might be a little hokey and America-centric, and the boss battles are goofy contrivances, but the white-knuckle action and warlike intensity make Medal of Honor: European Assault very enjoyable. As games become more realistic, they lose some of their arcade-style luster—Medal of Honor's action is slow, gritty and methodical. But tanks and wave after wave of intelligent enemy soldiers keep your brow sweaty and your hands trembling throughout the four locations. The experience is accentuated by excellent audio work: bullets zing past your ears and soldiers comment constantly on enemy locations. And when there's nothing going on, the sounds of battles in the distance keep you focused on your task. World War II games tend to degrade in quality the deeper you get into them; European Assault rights this wrong with realistic level design and an evenly increasing difficulty level. It's interesting that the enemies are so much smarter than your own squad members—the opposing forces move between cover, keep their heads down, and wait in ambush instead of charging your position. Your squad, however, mills around, never crouches, and doesn't always engage the enemy, even in close-combat situations. It's not a terrible flaw—most of the time you can complete a mission on your own in the event that tragedy befalls them. —**Chris S.**

Fight for freedom the old-fashioned way.



SUCK IT UP

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD!

KIRBY: CANVAS CURSE

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **HAL LABORATORY**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Sketch gamers are a new breed, and they've raced up the learning curve, dabbling in the art of the quick draw by playing the mini- and microgames in Super Mario 64 DS and WarioWare: Touched!, then sharpening their skills with Yoshi Touch & Go and Pac-Pix. It's easy enough to pick up either of the DS arcade games and think you're good—until you watch these sketch masters at work. As they scribble up a storm to protect Yoshi from harm for an hour at a time, or wage war against Pac-Pix's ultimate boss by conjuring legions of Pac-Men, you get the feeling that you've been left behind. Recall that first time you observed one of those Dance Dance Revolution superhumans in motion? It's like that. But I, for one, refuse to get served on DS turf.

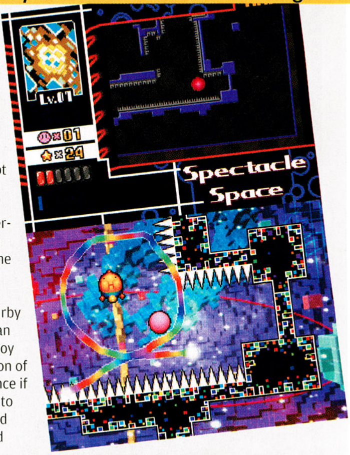
Fortunately, Kirby: Canvas Curse is one helluva crash course. Fully stylus-driven, Kirby's new 2-D adventure spans many worlds (lava, caves, grottoes, etc.) that you've seen in previous platformers, but every one's an eye-opener thanks to the new control scheme.

You'll make Kirby (made spherical by a witch's curse) roll forward by jabbing him, and you can guide his path by scrawling lines for him to follow. When you want him to really pour on the speed, you can draw a loop—Sonic-style, he'll tear through it and soar out the end. The early levels are a breeze, but you'll soon be racing to draw quickly enough to keep Kirby above a tide of rising lava, trying to make loops in cramped cave tunnels and—in one of the game's many stylus twists—rethinking your sketch tactics when you realize that you've got to force buoyant Kirby underwater by drawing lines that hold him down.

When Kirby rolls into foes at normal speed, he'll take damage; but he'll mow 'em over instead if the creatures are stunned—which you can do by stabbing the prey just before Kirby touches it. He'll also bowl over a foe if he's cruising at high speed—jabbing Kirby will also give Kirby a quick speed burst in case you don't have a loop at hand.

The hero's classic copy abilities are also in play: If he blasts through a creature that has a special power, he can turn into the corresponding Kirby, and you can activate his ability with a stylus jab. Want to turn into a flying fireball to roast a horde? That's Burning Kirby. Gotta hammer a stake? Stone Kirby falls like a 10-ton weight. Need to fly upward some impossible distance? Missile Kirby. As in previous games, it's key to know which critters let Kirby make a specific transformation, and just as important to hold onto the power long enough (by not taking damage) to use it to solve a puzzle, reach a new area or simply to wreak havoc in a fun way. But it's the stylus control that makes the Kirby formula add up to a fresh experience.

Hyperspeed through loops? Sounds like Kirby may have beaten Sonic at his own game.

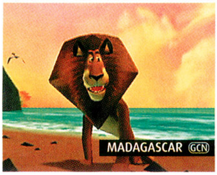


Though the stylus control gives this game longer legs than Kirby's typical adventures (except for the aforementioned veteran sketch gamers, perhaps), anyone can blast through to the boss finale in one day of heavy play. But as longtime Kirby platformer fans can confirm, you'll enjoy only a small portion of the Kirby experience if you don't go back to previous levels and experiment to find alternate paths and secret locations—which often involves much more difficult challenges. You'll need to search hard to find all of the 250 hidden medals, which you can use to unlock more game features, such as other playable characters (like the mallet-swinging King Dedede and sword-brandishing Meta Knight).

In Canvas Curse's Rainbow Run mode, you'll revisit worlds with two types of challenges: the expert-level Time Trial and the supremely tricky Line Trial, which challenges you to draw as little as possible on the way to the finish. The majority of Canvas Curse's medals are tied up in Rainbow Run, so the replay value is considerable, and perfect for hard-core sketch gamers.

The look and feel of Kirby's supersweet world are in full force on the DS—fantastic news for his devout fans. But for those of us who just love great, innovative gameplay, may I suggest a spoonful of medicine to help the sugar go down? When you're taking in all the bubble-gum sights and sounds, visualize a crazy night in Vegas. And know that what happens in Canvas Curse stays in Canvas Curse. —STEVEN G.

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE GCN


MADAGASCAR GCN

FANTASTIC FOUR GBA

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ASPYR
DEVELOPER: STARBREEZE STUDIOS
ESRB: MATURE

Heavy-handed storytelling and a camera that cuts to a new angle every time you turn a corner make value-priced adventure Knights of the Temple a chore to get through. The puzzles are the simplest kind of lock-and-key exercises, but they're made difficult by the too-complex location layouts and the navigation-hampering camera behavior. Yet, in open areas, where you're allowed to freely fight the more than 30 types of enemies—mad monks and shield-carrying guards among them—the game serves as a fun and fluid dungeon hacker and a showcase for more than a dozen special moves. The 25 settings, all rendered with medieval flair and excellent music, are good enough to make you wish that the developers had taken the knight-on-a-quest story less seriously and made a video game adaptation of *Spamalot* instead. —GEORGE S.

FANTASTIC FOUR

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TORUS GAMES
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

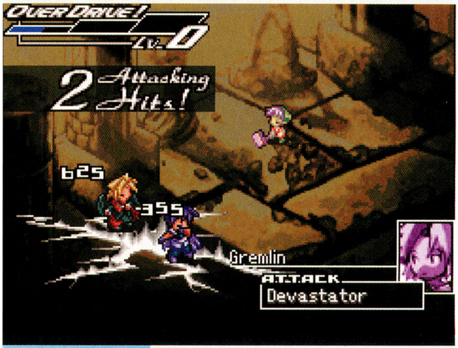
Isometric-view games make me nervous. They give an illusion of 3-D depth, but having everything offset at a 45-degree angle just looks unnatural. Thankfully, the control scheme for Activision's GBA movie-based Fantastic Four title is straight on, not angled, and the characters never disappear behind obstacles like they do in some isometric-view games. The angles, however, are an issue when you try to pick up objects (double-tapping against items is tricky at times), but connecting with enemies is intuitive. The four heroes are broken into predetermined pairs for each mission. You control the characters one at a time, but switch between them at the press of a button. The heroes have specialties that exploit each one's powers, but why The Thing can destroy some doors and not others is a mystery. Rough around the edges as it is, the game is still a satisfying battle-intensive adventure. —GEORGE S.

MADAGASCAR

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: TOYS FOR BOB
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Madagascar is clearly designed with the younger audience in mind—more-experienced gamers will breeze right through the 10 levels. The game does a great job of mixing up the challenges so that you never feel like you've done the same thing twice. However, the difficulty of the challenges seems a little out of order. For example, the mission to race down busy New York streets early in the game feels much more difficult than the beach scavenger hunt level much later. To make up for the brief story mode, Madagascar boasts plenty of unlockables, including different outfits for the main characters and several fun minigames, such as a fun and demanding minigolf challenge and a rhythm game featuring tunes from the movie. If you can look past the somewhat clunky graphics and the very short game length, you'll find a well-made, creative title. —CHRIS S.



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

UNFULFILLED PROMISE

RIVIERA: THE PROMISED LAND

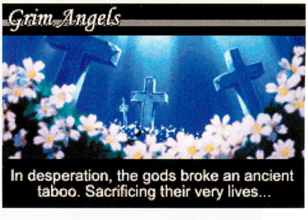
RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: STING
ESRB: TEEN

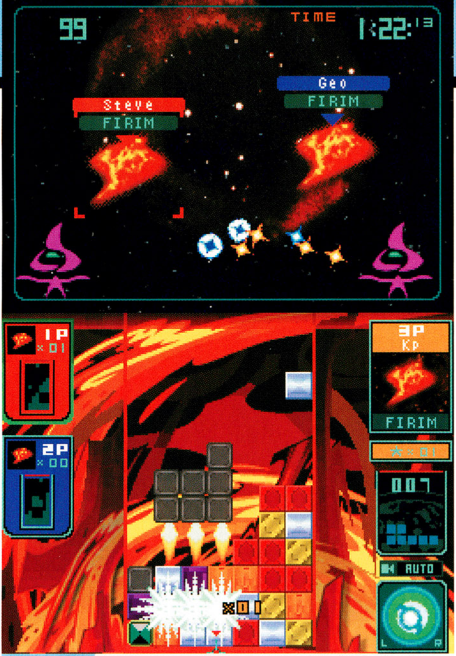
Riviera isn't like your typical RPG. Instead of moving your characters directly, you choose their destination from a field menu. You don't equip weapons or items; you pick four to bring with you before each battle. Rather than selecting which enemy to attack, the weapon you wield determines your target automatically. And you gain experience not by vanquishing your foes, but by using certain items. While these elements are certainly unique, they make for a pretty simplistic experience. There is some strategy involved in choosing the right characters and items before battle, but Final Fantasy this is not.

That's not to say the game is without merits. For one, the story is quite good, which is probably enough for some RPG fans. The hand-drawn graphics are attractive (if a bit underwhelming in the animation department), and while the quality of the music is a little uneven, most of the tracks are above average. Perhaps the neatest aspect, though, are all of the little minigames that play out during special events in the field. You might have to stop a cursor at the right point to avoid a trap, or quickly input a button sequence to dig up a valuable treasure. RPGs have been a rare commodity on the GBA lately, so if you're desperate to get your fix, Riviera will probably satisfy. Just don't expect the next great epic. —STEVE T.

Ein
Did this place use to be a temple...?



In desperation, the gods broke an ancient taboo. Sacrificing their very lives...



BLAST OFF

A SPACE ODDITY

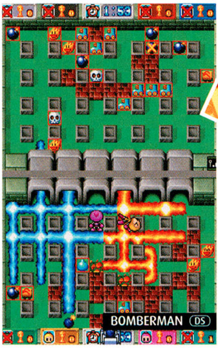
METEOS

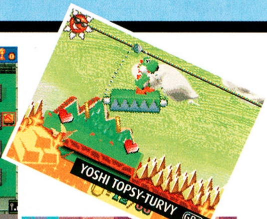
RATING: 9.0

Platform: Nintendo DS
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Q Entertainment/Bandai
ESRB: Everyone

While playing Meteos, you can't help but grin from ear to ear. The brainchild of Masahiro Sakurai (Super Smash Bros.) and Tetsuya Mizuguchi (Space Channel 5, Rez), it's frenetic, brilliantly innovative and overflowing with personality. (How often can you say that about a puzzle game?) Though the basic concept may seem familiar—you line up like-colored blocks that fall from the sky—the game is quite a departure from the genre norm. Instead of simply disappearing when you align them, the blocks transform into rockets and launch back into space, carrying with them any blocks piled above. If the thrusters are loaded with too many blocks, however, they may not be able to escape the planet's orbit. You can give them a boost by lining up additional rows or columns in mid-flight. Your goal is ultimately to fire enough blocks at the opposing planet to destroy it.

The core gameplay is incredibly addictive in and of itself, but Sakurai and Mizuguchi went the extra light-year to keep things fresh. As you meet certain conditions in the single-player game (play for an hour, earn four different endings, etc.), you'll unlock a bevy of new planets, weapons and other goodies. What's more, every world is different in terms of gravity, block selection and playfield size, forcing you to adjust your strategies accordingly. Meteos is also one of the best multiplayer experiences to be had on the DS. That you defeat your friends by *destroying their home planets* is particularly satisfying. Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the game's remarkable soundtrack. The music varies to match each planet's look, offering everything from cool Caribbean-style beats to pumping techno. Easily my favorite DS game yet. —Steve T.


BOMBERMAN (DS)


YOSHI TOPSY-TURVY (GBA)

DISNEY'S MAGICAL QUEST 3 (GBA)

BOMBERMAN

RATING: 7.0

Platform: Nintendo DS
Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Hudson Soft
ESRB: Everyone

Got DS-equipped friends? One of you should own Bomberman. With a single DS card, you can broadcast eight-player DS Download Play competitions that are classic Bomberman (bombers go at each other's throats in a destructible maze) and offer smorgasbord-like variety: 30 dual-screened arenas (ranging from a trapdoor stage to a voice-activated-detonation zone) and lotsa options like a prebattle slot machine that awards extra firepower. In a new multiplayer twist, after you've been bombed out of the picture, you can touch-flick bombs from the sidelines; if you blast someone, you go back into play. Solo players can battle against seven AI foes and embark on a 100-stage challenge complete with bosses, but the multiplayer mode is the star of this show. —Steven G.

YOSHI TOPSY-TURVY

RATING: 7.0

Platform: Game Boy Advance
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Artoon
ESRB: Everyone

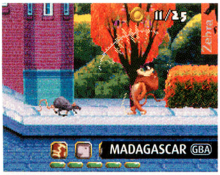
Yoshi returns to platform gaming, this time with a twist. Topsy-Turvy allows players to rotate the game's world by spinning the GBA like a steering wheel, adding a whole new dimension to platform controls. The concept of tapping into a gamer's natural instinct to move the controller around is a novel one—it was pulled off brilliantly in WarioWare: Twisted!. Topsy-Turvy, however, suffers from straying too far into the world of microgaming. The long levels and boss battles of common side-scrollers are replaced with one short level after another, and a boss battle at the very end of the game. You're never really allowed to get into the flow of things. The spinning gimmick is fun at some points in the game, but a lot of the time it goes against intuition, requiring you to spin the hardware one direction and move Yoshi the other. Despite its shortcomings, the game is solid, displaying the attention to detail you'd expect from a Nintendo-published platformer. —Andy M.

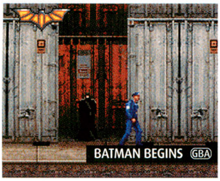
DISNEY'S MAGICAL QUEST 3 STARRING MICKEY & DONALD

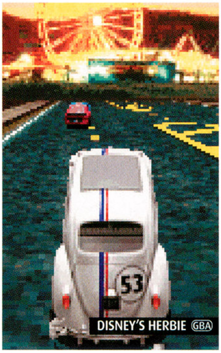
RATING: 5.5

Platform: Game Boy Advance
Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
ESRB: Everyone

The hook of Capcom's third platformer starring Disney's venerable mouse is the same as in its predecessors: you earn three different costumes that you can change into, each with its own unique abilities. As with the previous games, however, it's a great concept that's sorely underutilized. What's more, this not-so-magical quest suffers from spotty hit detection and just doesn't feel as tight as it should. When you combine those shortcomings with lots of cheap, instant deaths, it's a recipe for frustration (particularly for younger gamers). The two-player mode is cool and the graphics are better than average, but the control problems weigh too heavily for the game to be much fun. —Steve T.







MADAGASCAR

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance/Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Vicarious Visions
ESRB: Everyone

They're not innovative, but Vicarious Visions's licensed-property handheld platformers get the job done. The GBA and DS versions of Madagascar have you hopping over obstacles, warding off enemies and collecting minigame-unlocking coins while using the special abilities of the film's four main characters. Although most of the gameplay consists of platform jumping, a few missions offer stealth—hiding in dark corners à la Sam Fisher to avoid detection, while the camera zooms out to show the locations of your pursuers. Tight tuning and top-notch control put the game in a league with Vicarious Visions's Shrek 2: Beg for Mercy. DS extras include a pair of bonus levels and a single-game-card two-player wireless minigame. —George S.

BATMAN BEGINS

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: Vicarious Visions
ESRB: Teen

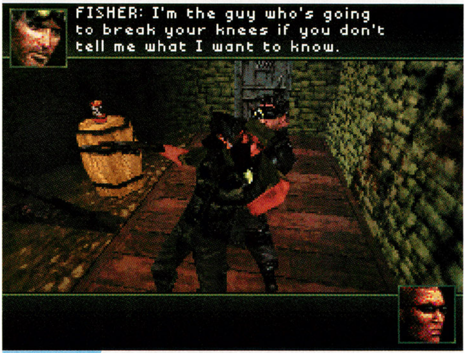
In an attempt to bring stealth gaming into the realm of side-scrollers, Batman Begins has borrowed heavily from Ubisoft's Splinter Cell series for GBA. You can see it in just about every aspect of the game. (Even Batman's posture and movement scream Sam Fisher.) Dark corridors are scattered throughout each level for Batman to hide in and avoid drawing the attention of enemies. Only one level in the game requires you to be stealthy, however—the others give you the option to play however you like. But versatile gameplay requires well-thought-out level design and game flow, neither of which exists in Batman Begins. The levels are long, the checkpoints are few, and the difficulty jumps all over the place. The clash between combat and stealth is most apparent when you're trying to perform an uppercut against an enemy while standing in front of a dark corridor: both actions require pressing Up on the Control Pad, which makes for many a frustrating moment in the face of danger. The game also has some performance problems, including slowdown on the last level. —Andy M.

DISNEY'S HERBIE: FULLY LOADED

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Disney Interactive
DEVELOPER: Disney Interactive
ESRB: Everyone

Born in the '60s as Herbie the Love Bug, Disney's little Volkswagen that could is enjoying a comeback with a new film and a movie-tie-in GBA racer. The game's turning controls are stiff and the tracks are flat, but the AI-controlled competitors are well-tuned and pick-ups bring out the car's personality. Tournament mode takes you through the game's eight courses, awarding you points for placing in the money. Story mode is a run through the same courses with between-race movie stills and words of encouragement from star Lindsay Lohan—a nice touch, but the overall game makes a lackluster effort at capturing the spirit of the film. —George S.



FISHER: I'm the guy who's going to break your knees if you don't tell me what I want to know.

LIGHTS OUT

UNDER THE RADAR

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Gameloft
ESRB: Teen

Ubisoft's secrecy regarding their Spliter Cell DS game has had most fans assuming that Chaos Theory's DS iteration would be a GBA-esque side-scroller, with some interactive afterthoughts thrown in to appease owners of the hardware. This couldn't be further from the truth. Ubisoft has made a great effort with the handheld debut of Chaos Theory, showing that third-party developers are quite capable of utilizing the DS's unique functionality. Because of the lacking graphical quality compared to console versions of Chaos Theory, lighting effects do not drive the gameplay. But Ubisoft makes up for that in other ways. Levels have been redesigned—some are even longer than the console versions'. And the game's mechanics have been completely rethought. You can aim a gun, control the camera, pick locks and do many other things using the touch screen. Sam Fisher now has a radar showing enemy and camera locations (similar to the GBA connectivity functions of the GCN Splinter Cell titles). However, the radar blips will not appear until he slides his optic cable under a door to scope out a room.

Splinter Cell games are known for stealth, but the option to play recklessly is usually available. Some fans even prefer it. The DS version works really well as a stealth game because you can take your time setting up scenarios, and switching to the touch screen to aim is not a big deal when you aren't racing against the clock. Chaos Theory's weakness is that the gameplay tends to break down when the action heats up. If you're spotted by an enemy or faced with a quick decision, the aiming system is not quite intuitive enough to get the job done. Once in a while, you'll find yourself fumbling between the Control Pad and the touch screen, and by the time you get situated with the stylus, the enemy will have already mowed you down. The multiplayer element, though a thoughtful addition, is also lacking. But all things considered, the game is really quite good. It's long, and the levels and gameplay are solid throughout. As a single-player affair, Chaos Theory is a welcome addition to the Nintendo DS lineup. —Andy M.

[ARCHIVE]

THE YEAR IN GAMING

Nothing sums up what we've been doing for the last 12 months like a list of games released for the GCN, DS and GBA, complete with our scores, calibrated to Nintendo Power's new 10-point scale. And an illustrious list it is. Looking it over just makes you want to pick up and play Pikmin 2 all over again.

Title	Score	Plat.	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	GCN	THQ	186	E
Alien Hominid	6.5	GCN	O~3	187	T
Amazing Island	5.5	GCN	Sega	184	E
Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt	3.0	GCN	Ignition	190	E
Bad Boys: Miami Takedown	2.5	GCN	Empire Interactive	185	M
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	9.0	GCN	Namco	187	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	4.5	GCN	Activision	189	T
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	7.0	GCN	Activision	187	T
Catwoman	4.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	184	T
Def Jam: Fight for NY	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	M
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	6.0	GCN	Bandai	185	T
Digimon World 4	7.0	GCN	Bandai	193	E
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	9.0	GCN	Nintendo	191	E
Donkey Konga	8.5	GCN	Nintendo	185	E
Donkey Konga 2	7.5	GCN	Nintendo	192	E
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	5.0	GCN	Atari	188	T
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	5.5	GCN	Atari	192	T
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	GCN	Activision	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.5	GCN	THQ	185	E
FIFA Soccer 2005	8.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	E
FIFA Street	6.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	191	E
Fight Night: Round 2	8.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	191	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	5.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	188	T
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	182	E
The Incredibles	7.0	GCN	THQ	186	T
Intellivision Lives!	3.0	GCN	Crave	187	E
international golf and tennis	3.0	GCN	Ignition	193	E
Killer 7	8.5	GCN	Capcom	193	M
King Arthur	4.5	GCN	Konami	187	T
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	7.0	GCN	Activision	188	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	6.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	187	T
Lotus Challenge	1.5	GCN	Ignition	183	E
Madden NFL 2005	9.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	184	E
Mario Party 6	7.5	GCN	Nintendo	188	E
Mario Power Tennis	7.0	GCN	Nintendo	187	E
MC Groovz: Dancecraze	5.0	GCN	Mad Catz	189	E
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	8.0	GCN	Capcom	182	E
Mega Man X: Command Mission	6.5	GCN	Capcom	186	E
Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	9.5	GCN	Nintendo	187	T
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	7.5	GCN	Midway	188	M
Mortal Kombat: Deception	7.5	GCN	Midway	191	M
MVP Baseball 2005	9.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	191	E
NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	185	E
NBA Live 2005	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	E
NBA Street V3	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	190	E
NCAA Football 2005	9.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	183	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	7.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	188	E
NFL Street 2	7.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	189	E
NHL 2005	7.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	E
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door	9.0	GCN	Nintendo	186	E
Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II Plus	5.5	GCN	Sega	184	T
Pikmin 2	9.5	GCN	Nintendo	184	E
Pinball Hall of Fame	4.5	GCN	Crave	189	E
The Polar Express	5.0	GCN	THQ	187	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	5.0	GCN	THQ	186	E
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	9.0	GCN	Ubisoft	188	M
Puyo Pop Fever	6.5	GCN	Sega	182	E
Rave Master	5.0	GCN	Konami	192	T
Resident Evil 4	10.0	GCN	Capcom	189	M
Ribbit King	7.0	GCN	Bandai	182	E
Robots	5.0	GCN	VU Games	190	E
Scaler	6.5	GCN	Global Star	188	E
Second Sight	9.5	GCN	Codemasters	185	T
Spider-Man 2	7.5	GCN	Activision	183	T
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	7.0	GCN	THQ	186	E
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	5.5	GCN	VU Games	187	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	7.5	GCN	Namco	185	T
Star Fox: Assault	8.0	GCN	Nintendo	189	T
Strike Force Bowling	4.5	GCN	Crave	190	E
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	8.0	GCN	THQ	186	E
Tales of Symphonia	9.5	GCN	Namco	183	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Melee	3.0	GCN	Konami	192	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	4.0	GCN	Konami	186	T
Terminator 3: The Redemption	7.5	GCN	Atari	185	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	E
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	8.5	GCN	Electronic Arts	191	M
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	4.5	GCN	Ubisoft	192	T
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	6.0	GCN	Ubisoft	182	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	GCN	Ubisoft	192	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	8.0	GCN	Ubisoft	183	T
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	7.5	GCN	Activision	186	T
Trigger Man	1.0	GCN	Crave	186	T
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	5.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	186	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.0	GCN	Electronic Arts	187	T
Viewtiful Joe 2	9.0	GCN	Capcom	187	T
Virtua Quest	5.5	GCN	Sega	189	T
WWE: Day of Reckoning	8.0	GCN	THQ	185	T
X-Men Legends	8.0	GCN	Activision	186	T
Zoids: Battle Legends	3.5	GCN	Atari	185	T
Asphalt Urban GT	6.5	DS	Ubisoft	188	E
Feel the Magic: XY/XX	9.0	DS	Sega	188	T
Madden NFL 2005	7.5	DS	Electronic Arts	188	E
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	7.0	DS	Namco	188	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	6.0	DS	Electronic Arts	193	E
Pac-Pix	8.0	DS	Namco	192	E
Ping Pals	5.0	DS	THQ	188	E
Pokémon Dash	5.0	DS	Nintendo	191	E
Polarium	7.5	DS	Nintendo	192	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	DS	Atlus	193	E
Rayman DS	6.5	DS	Ubisoft	191	E
Retro Atari Classics	5.0	DS	Atari	191	E
Ridge Racer DS	7.0	DS	Namco	188	E
Robots	4.5	DS	VU Games	190	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	DS	Activision	188	E
Sprung	7.5	DS	Ubisoft	188	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	DS	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Mario 64 DS	8.5	DS	Nintendo	188	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.0	DS	Electronic Arts	188	E

REVIEWER NOTES

KILLER 7

Killer 7 is unequivocally the strangest game I've ever played. It's like being enveloped in the twisted dreams of its creators, the narrative always just beyond your grasp. I love the stylized visuals, dissonant sound design and highly charged political themes. It's the kind of unapologetic artistry you rarely see in a video game. —Steve T.

>FIGHT NIGHT: ROUND 2

Even if the sweet science strikes a sour note with you, the first great boxing game to hit the GCN is worth a swing. It lets you float like a butterfly and sting like a bee with style befitting a champ. —George S.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

I occasionally awake with a start in the middle of the night thinking about Resident Evil 4, and no, it's not because the game gives me nightmares. Instead, I wake up thinking about how much RE4 freakin' rocked and how much longer I might have to wait to play another game like it. Now *that* gives me nightmares. —Chris S.

>PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN

Despite Ubisoft's best efforts to ruin it with darker attitude and an incongruous rock soundtrack, Warrior Within succeeds on the strength of its gameplay. Here's hoping the suits keep their noses out of part three. —Steve T.

Title	Score	Plat.	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	DS	Electronic Arts	188	E
WarioWare: Touched!	9.0	DS	Nintendo	190	E
World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series	5.0	DS	Crave	192	E
Yoshi Touch & Go	7.0	DS	Nintendo	191	E
Zoo Keeper	4.5	DS	Ignition	189	E

Title	Score	Plat.	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
Ace Combat Advance	4.0	GBA	Namco	190	E
Advance Guardian Heroes	7.5	GBA	Ubisoft	185	E
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	GBA	THQ	185	E
Animaniacs: Lights! Camera! Action!	4.5	GBA	Ignition	190	E
Around the World in 80 Days	4.0	GBA	Hip Interactive	184	E
Astro Boy: Omega Factor	9.0	GBA	Sega	184	E
Backyard Basketball	4.5	GBA	Atari	186	E
Banjo Pilot	7.0	GBA	THQ	189	E
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django	7.5	GBA	Konami	185	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventure	2.0	GBA	Activision	188	T
Cartoon Network Block Party	3.0	GBA	Majesco	185	E
Catwoman	5.5	GBA	Electronic Arts	183	T
Classic NES Series Castlevania	8.5	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Dr. Mario	7.0	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Metroid	8.0	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Zelda II: The Adventure of Link	7.0	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Codename Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A.	4.5	GBA	Global Star	187	E
Crushed Baseball	2.5	GBA	Summitsoft	186	E
Dead to Rights	5.0	GBA	Destination	187	T
Digimon Racing	5.5	GBA	Bandai	184	E
Donkey Kong Country 2	6.5	GBA	Nintendo	187	E
Dragon Ball Z: Buu's Fury	7.0	GBA	Atari	185	E
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors	5.5	GBA	Atari	182	T
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	GBA	Activision	185	E
Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown	4.0	GBA	Atari	187	E
Duel Masters: Sempai Legends	5.0	GBA	Atari	182	E
Elf	2.0	GBA	Crave	187	E
F/A 18F: Super Hornet	3.5	GBA	Majesco	188	E
F-Zero—GP Legend	7.5	GBA	Nintendo	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.0	GBA	THQ	186	E
Fear Factor Unleashed	3.0	GBA	Hip Interactive	187	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	7.0	GBA	Electronic Arts	186	E
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	8.5	GBA	Square Enix	187	E
Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures	3.5	GBA	THQ	186	E
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	GBA	Nintendo	193	E
Golden Nugget Casino	2.0	GBA	Majesco	188	E
Grand Theft Auto Advance	7.5	GBA	Rockstar	186	M
Gundam Seed: Battle Assault	5.0	GBA	Bandai	186	T
Hamtaro: Ham Ham Games	7.0	GBA	Nintendo	183	E
Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	6.0	GBA	THQ	188	E
Hugo: The Evil Mirror	3.0	GBA	Namco	192	E
The Incredibles	6.0	GBA	THQ	186	E
It's Mr. Pants	6.5	GBA	THQ	187	E
Kill.Switch	6.0	GBA	Destination	185	T
Killer 3-D Pool	4.0	GBA	Destination	192	E
Kim Possible 2: Drakken's Demise	5.0	GBA	Disney	183	E
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	7.5	GBA	Square Enix	188	E
Kirby & The Amazing Mirror	8.0	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament	8.5	GBA	Namco	190	E
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap	9.5	GBA	Nintendo	189	E
LEGO Knights' Kingdom	5.0	GBA	THQ	187	E
LEGO *Star Wars*	6.5	GBA	Eidos	192	E
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	6.0	GBA	Activision	186	E
Lilo and Stitch 2: Hamsterviel Havoc	5.5	GBA	Buena Vista	185	E
Lizzie McGuire 2	3.5	GBA	Buena Vista	186	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	8.0	GBA	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madden NFL 2005	6.0	GBA	Electronic Arts	184	E
Mario Golf: Advance Tour	8.5	GBA	Nintendo	182	E
Mario Party Advance	6.0	GBA	Nintendo	191	E
Mario Pinball Land	7.5	GBA	Nintendo	186	E
Mega Man Battle Network 4: Red Sun & Blue Moon Versions	7.0	GBA	Capcom	182	E
Mega Man Zero 3	7.5	GBA	Capcom	186	E
Metal Slug Advance	8.5	GBA	SNK	188	T
Mighty Beanz Pocket Puzzles	3.0	GBA	Majesco	183	E
Monopoly	5.0	GBA	Destination	188	E
Monster Trucks	3.5	GBA	Majesco	189	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	GBA	Namco	193	E
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	6.0	GBA	Destination	185	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	5.0	GBA	Electronic Arts	187	E
Nicktoons: Freeze Frame Frenzy	4.5	GBA	THQ	186	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	GBA	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World	6.0	GBA	Destination	188	E
Pokémon Emerald	6.5	GBA	Nintendo	192	E
Pokémon FireRed and Pokémon LeafGreen	9.0	GBA	Nintendo	184	E
The Polar Express	5.5	GBA	THQ	187	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	GBA	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	4.0	GBA	THQ	186	E
Racing Gears Advance	7.5	GBA	Orbital Media	189	E
Rapala Pro Fishing	3.5	GBA	Activision	186	E
Rayman: Hoodlum's Revenge	5.5	GBA	Ubisoft	191	E
Robots	4.5	GBA	VU Games	190	E
Rugrats: All Grown Up! —Express Yourself	4.0	GBA	THQ	186	E
Scrabble Blast	7.5	GBA	Destination	193	E
SD Gundam Force	5.5	GBA	Bandai	186	E
Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits—Soaring Hawk/ Sprinting Wolf	3.5	GBA	Konami	191	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits	7.0	GBA	Konami	184	E
Shrek 2: Beg For Mercy	4.5	GBA	Activision	188	E
Smashing Drive	4.5	GBA	Destination	188	E
Sonic Advance 3	7.5	GBA	THQ	182	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	GBA	Activision	182	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	5.0	GBA	THQ	186	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	GBA	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Star Wars Trilogy: Apprentice of the Force	5.5	GBA	Ubisoft	185	E
Strawberry Shortcake: Summertime Adventure	3.0	GBA	Majesco	189	E
Super Army War	6.5	GBA	Atlus	190	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	6.0	GBA	Konami	186	E
Ten Pin Alley 2	2.5	GBA	XS Games	183	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	3.0	GBA	Majesco	188	E
That's So Raven	2.0	GBA	Buena Vista	186	E
Thunder Alley	1.5	GBA	XS Games	184	E
Thunderbirds	3.0	GBA	VU Games	186	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	GBA	Crave	193	E
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	6.5	GBA	Activision	186	E
Tron 2.0: Killer Ap	7.0	GBA	Buena Vista	185	E
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	4.5	GBA	Electronic Arts	187	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	GBA	Electronic Arts	187	E
Van Helsing	4.0	GBA	VU Games	182	T
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	GBA	Nintendo	193	E
World Championship Poker	3.5	GBA	Crave	188	E
WWE Survivor Series	3.0	GBA	THQ	187	T
XS Moto	2.0	GBA	XS Games	183	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board Traveler	2.5	GBA	Konami	188	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Reshef of Destruction	4.5	GBA	Konami	183	E
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	3.0	GBA	Atari	187	E
Zoids: Legacy	4.5	GBA	Atari	185	E

>FEEL THE MAGIC: XY/XX

People complain about the lack of new games out there. FTM is in the regrettable position to explain why—they don't sell well enough. Here's your chance to let your pocketbook make real change in the gaming industry.

—Chris S.

RACING GEARS ADVANCE

This is one of the best games to come along for the Game Boy Advance ever, and here's why: it doesn't consider itself more than a Game Boy Advance game. It doesn't try to employ blocky 3-D graphics or crunch hit songs into scratchy background tracks. It simply takes what the Game Boy Advance will give it and asks for nothing more, and that's exactly what I want.

—Chris S.

>WARIOWARE: TOUCHED!

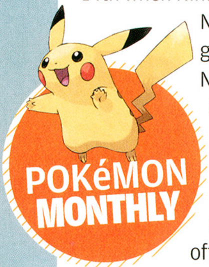
Exceeding previous WarioWares, Touched! brings us a collection of microgames that grow more crazy difficult as you continue to play—which is the secret to this game's replay value.

—Steven G.

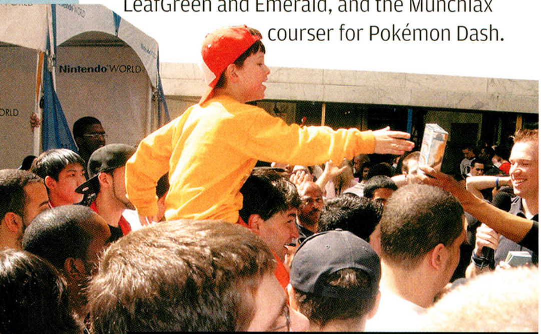
ASTRO BOY: OMEGA FACTOR

The fact that games like Yu-Gi-Oh! and That's So Raven sell like hotcakes while Astro Boy: Omega Factor struggles to find an audience makes me weep openly at night. Developed by the masterminds at Treasure, Astro Boy is one of the best action romps for the GBA.—Steve T.

From Hoenn to New York



Pokémon fans were out in force on May 14th when Nintendo World, the first ever all-Nintendo store, celebrated its grand opening. For the event, Nintendo took over New York City's Rockefeller Center, where thousands of devotees showed up to join the party and collect some free goodies. In addition to the day's many events, Nintendo offered two very special downloads to Pokémon fans for the first time in the US: the Mystic Ticket for Pokémon FireRed, LeafGreen and Emerald, and the Munchlax courser for Pokémon Dash.



An attendee reaches for his prize after answering a question correctly during the Pokémon trivia marathon.

The Mystic Ticket is a wireless download for the three latest Pokémon GBA titles. It enables Trainers to catch Lugia and Ho-oh for the first time in the North American versions of the games. To say that a lot of people showed up to nab the Mystic Ticket would be a colossal understatement. Pokémon Trainers of all ages traveled from all over the country for a chance at catching the two rare Pokémon.

Seth helps a young girl hone her Pokémon-catching skills.

The line started forming in the wee hours of the morning for the afternoon event, and ended up spanning multiple New York City blocks for most of the day. Fans waited in line patiently, most carrying Game Boy Advance systems and playing their Pokémon games. The queue led to a booth in Rockefeller Center, where Pokémon experts helped Trainers download the Mystic Ticket to their game paks wirelessly. After the download booth, the line led into the main event area, where fans could participate in activities (though at that point most fans just couldn't wait to try out their altered Pokémon games).

Inside the store, Nintendo Employee and Pokémon expert Seth McMahill served as a portable hub for Dash fans to download the Munchlax course wirelessly onto their Nintendo DS Pokémon Dash game cards. Everyone within Seth's wireless range was able to obtain the special course, but their game cards needed to be played up to a certain point to be eligible. Many attendees could be seen frantically playing their Pokémon Dash games to qualify for the download. In the end, hundreds partook of the free expansion course. —Andy M.

Nintendo WORLD

Pikachu looks on as fans swarm Rockefeller Center.

COLLECTING

All We Can Say Is "Wow."

We went searching for the biggest video game fan (and possibly the coolest person) ever, and I think it's safe to say that we found him. His name is Jason, and his video game collection is nothing short of astounding.

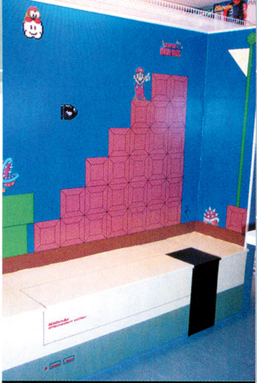
Any game collector who sees the photos of Jason's game room on his website, www.nescapades.com, will be put to shame. Jason's is easily the most extensive video game collection we've ever seen. In fact, it's so impressive that some people just can't cope. Jason asked us to keep his true identity private due to the large number of threats he's received recently. But can you really blame the fanatics? Seeing this game room has already driven the NP staff into a covetous rage.

Jason lives in a small town in Virginia, in a five-bedroom house with his wife and son. A couple of years ago, he had the idea to turn his spare bedroom into an oasis to house his growing game collection. Today, the room is nearly full, though his collection continues to grow. Vintage software from every game system known to man lines the room's walls. Jason says the pride of his collection is his NES cartridges—he owns a complete set of licensed NES and Famicom games, consisting of over 1,400 unique titles! His most valuable NES game is the Rodland, which he had to purchase from a seller in Italy. Jason hopes someday to own every NES and Famicom game, licensed and unlicensed.

But his collection goes far beyond games. He collects everything that has anything to do with video games: snacks, posters, magazines, toys, peripherals—anything game-related that you can imagine. With so many different items on display, game-playing remains at the heart of the room. The only video game console that is not readily playable in the game room is his Sega Pico, which he keeps in the living room for his three-year-old son to play. Regarding the reaction of family and friends who have seen the room, Jason says, "[They] mostly just say, 'Wow' when they first step in." —Andy M.

Cartridges from every game system line the many shelves of Jason's game room.

After being snubbed by the Academy, at least somebody remembers *The Wizard*, the Fred Savage movie in which Super Mario Bros. 3 debuted.

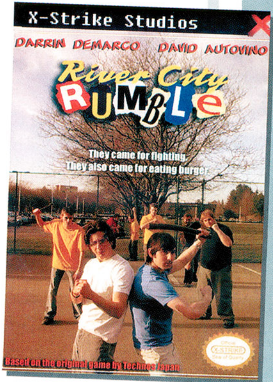

Check out Jason's homemade NES bench. He's still working on the six-foot-wide cartridges that will go inside.

Though Jason collects everything game-related, his love for Nintendo products is obvious no matter which direction you look.

MOVIES

Keepin' It Real

What happens when hard-core NES fans have a lot of ambition and way too much time on their hands? *River City Rumble*, that's what. *River City Rumble* is a feature-length movie based entirely on the classic NES game River City Ransom. The movie is hailed as "the *Citizen Kane* of films based on martial-arts video games" from a source you can definitely trust: the back of the DVD case. We here at NP watched the movie for ourselves, and while we don't consider ourselves movie critics, we found the movie mildly entertaining in light of the very apparent low budget. If you're a superfan of River City Ransom, *River City Rumble* will give you a few laughs. The team at X-Strike Studios, the group behind the undertaking, made the movie because they feel that Hollywood has mishandled video game-based movies, and they wanted to do it right for once. Their new film, *Silent Horror* (a spoof on the survival horror game genre), is scheduled for release this month. —Andy M.



COLLECTING

Virtual Boy

At the time of the Virtual Boy's launch, Nintendo Power called the system the "most daring gaming system in history," and indeed it was. No other video game company before or since has tried to make a home 3-D system of its type, a testament to the risks involved with releasing such an experimental piece of hardware. Developed by longtime Nintendo engineer Gunpei Yokoi, creator of the Game Boy, the Virtual Boy made its debut 10 years ago this August. This month, we celebrate the anniversary of the Virtual Boy's launch, along with Mr. Yokoi's vision and his embracing of Nintendo's commitment to innovation.

Nintendo
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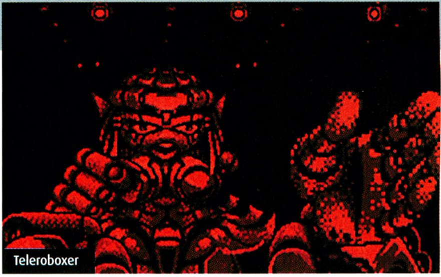
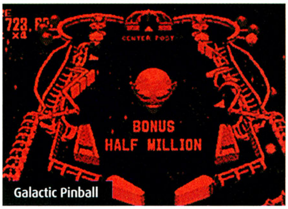
VIRTUAL BOY
Nintendo



Teleroboxer

The Virtual Boy achieved its remarkable 3-D graphics through the use of two LED arrays, creating a stereoscopic environment. The effect is similar to how the old View-Master toys produced simulated 3-D pictures. The VB controller was ahead of its time, as well—its shape is eerily similar to the GCN controller. Every Virtual Boy came bundled with Mario's Tennis, one of the earliest examples of Mario's affinity for sports. Other games at launch were Galactic Pinball, Red Alarm and Teleroboxer, followed by solid titles like Mario Clash and Wario Land.

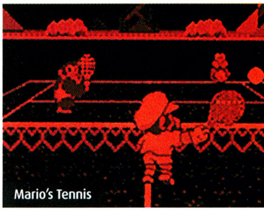
The system wasn't exactly a raving success; its debut was met by a lot of criticism, unfortunately often from people who hadn't yet played it. The gaming media was skeptical of the monochromatic images, and a $179 launch price made it a difficult sell for the mainstream. Ironically, the reason for the red-hued screen was to keep the cost down; adding other colors would have been much more expensive. After six months of lower-than-expected sales figures, Nintendo decided to stop manufacturing the system.



Galactic Pinball

While the official life of the Virtual Boy wasn't long, the continued fan support for the system shows just how much potential the hardware has. In fact, there's still a vibrant Virtual Boy community. A quick Internet search reveals an impressive number of enthusiasts dedicated to all manner of Virtual Boy topics, from game reviews and cheat codes to disassembling the hardware in order to paint the unit's shell.

There is also a strong community based on programming new games for the Virtual Boy—a difficult task to say the least, considering the programmers work completely without development support. Hobbyist Virtual Boy developers have even gone so far as to look for ways to add rumble and multiplayer aspects to the venerable system. (A little note to Virtual Boy owners: If your Virtual Boy is working properly, don't dive headlong into these projects. Many of the steps are dangerous to the health of your system, and the ways to fix a mangled VB are becoming fewer and fewer.)



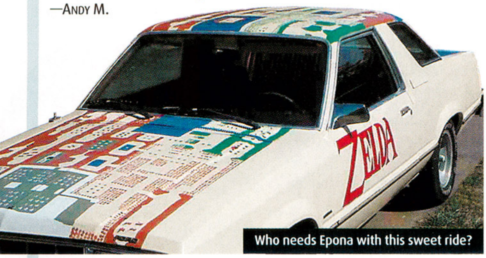
Mario's Tennis

The Virtual Boy isn't exactly a rare commodity, but good-condition systems and game collections can fetch a pretty penny on auction sites like eBay. Rare games such as Waterworld and several games that came out only in Japan bring top dollar, if they can be found at all. But bargain hunters can still find perfectly functional Virtual Boy systems on the cheap at places like used game stores and swap meets. If you come across one, pick it up and relive a part of Nintendo's rich history. —**Chris S.**

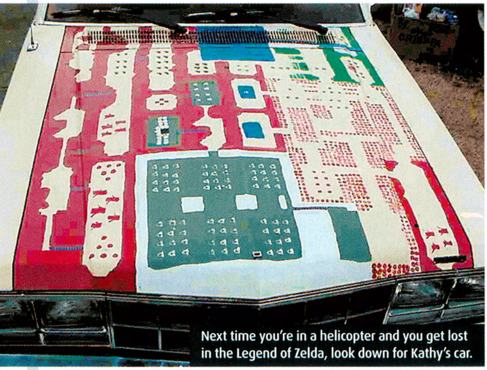
ART

Hyrule Rollin'

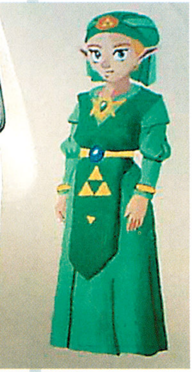
Kathy VanWormer is such a huge Zelda fan, she pimped her ride Hyrule-style. The entire map from the original NES game is painted across the car, and Link and Princess Zelda appear near the doors. Kathy also has Princess Zelda tattooed on her back, while her sister Becky has Link ink (see the pictures to the right).
—Andy M.

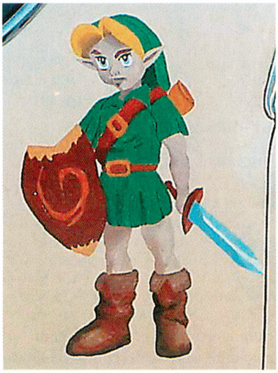


Who needs Epona with this sweet ride?



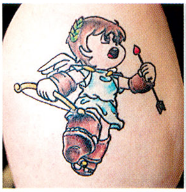
Next time you're in a helicopter and you get lost in the Legend of Zelda, look down for Kathy's car.



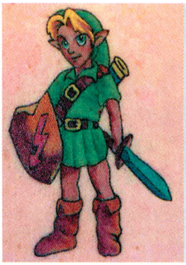


Free Advertising

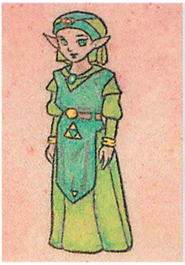
When Kathy V. sent in photos of her Zelda car (see the photos to the left), she also slipped in shots of her tattoos, showing just how far her devotion goes. A few NOA employees were also eager to show off their game tattoos. Got one you want the world to see? Send us a photo displaying your Nintendo love. —Chris S.



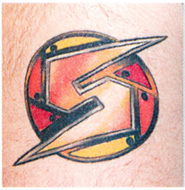
Pit (Kid Icarus), NOA Goonie



Link, Becky VanWormer



Zelda , Kathy VanWormer



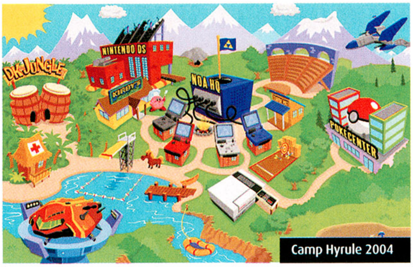
Screw Attack (Metroid), NOA Dudelove

MUSIC

Classical Gaming

We were so floored by a video circulating the Web of a guy ferociously playing a Mario-themed medley blindfolded, we had to find out who he was. Others have taken an interest as well. The Video Game Pianist, as Martin Leung calls himself, was invited to perform his magic at the GDC and E3 this year. Check out his site at www.videogamepianist.com—besides videos and pictures, the site has a huge library of transcribed video game sheet music. —Andy M.

Imagine how good he'd be without the blindfold.

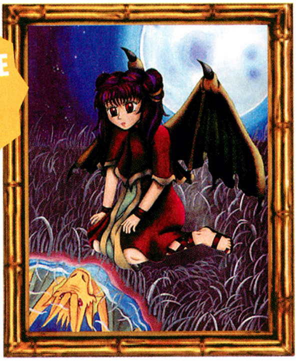


Camp Hyrule 2004

Camp Hyrule

Back for its 11th straight year, Camp Hyrule is going to be bigger than ever! Last year's events included NOA face painting and cabin contests, as well as guest chats from Reggie and other NOA personalities. When camp begins this August, look forward to a Nintendogs park and a Mario sports arena, as well as even more happenings. Visit **camphyrule.com** frequently next month as more information emerges.

MAY'S ART OF THE MONTH
Hand-drawn Category

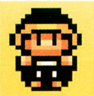


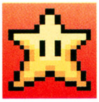
ARTIST:
GODDESSZELDA

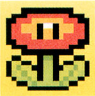
SUBJECT:
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones

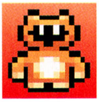
Congratulations to May's winner in the hand-drawn category of NP's fan-art contest. You can post your entry at **forums.nintendo.com**.

Custom-Made Avatars **By designer Cory Conner**









Sage Reviews

We've already received some excellent game reviews from our trusted sages, but keep them rolling in! Bear in mind that we're looking for solid game critique, not just an overview of a game's features.

Sage Review of the Month

TimeSplitters: Future Perfect

reviewed by KEZAY

Back in action, Sgt. Cortez returns to help set in motion a plan that will prevent the war between humans and the TimeSplitter race before it even starts. Boasting a more comprehensive single-player campaign as well as an all-new cooperative play option, this game made famous by its fun and frantic multiplayer elements has evolved into one of the greatest titles out there today. Sporting an excellent graphical overhaul, Future Perfect also looks about as great as it plays. New and classic characters look better than ever and all-new weaponry and maps further complement the foundation of the series. There are some minor issues with the sound, but outside of that you'll be hard-pressed to find anything out of place, which is always a good thing. Very few shooter titles these days can be considered new and refreshing, yet TimeSplitters breaks the mold every time.

Excerpts from other Sage Reviews

Tales of Symphonia
"I loved every piece of music that was recorded, and the voice acting was superior to most games."
—HYRULE PRINCESS

Pikmin 2
"The animations are impressive, offering vivid surroundings and well-detailed enemies and wildlife."
—MPRUNTY

Donkey Konga 2
"The only disappointment is the lack of video game songs (there's only one)."
—INTERNET_BOUND20

Polarium
"This new take on puzzles offers gameplay that is only possible thanks to the touch screen."
—JSR

What's a Sage?
Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

Calling All Community Members

Is your dorm, basement or living room specially designed for gaming? Send us photos and descriptions of your abode; we'll run the coolest gaming areas in a future issue. Also let us know about upcoming regional game tournaments in your area—we'll try to get the word out for you. And remember to chat with NP's writers on July 13th and July 20th from 4-5 PM Pacific time on the **nintendo.com** forums to let us know what community you're a part of.

community@nintendopower.com
pokemon_community@nintendopower.com

touching is good.
Ghost Grounds

Kirby™ Canvas Curse

Now you can use your finger to keep Kirby on the right path and out of trouble, as he ventures down the rainbow road to break the curse on Dream Land.

NINTENDO DS™

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Game and system sold separately. www.kirbykirbykirby.com

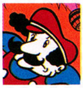
POWER QUIZ

MARIO VS. YOU

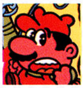
Mario's feeling a bit pompous because of his showing up the world on the baseball diamond, the soccer field, the race track and the dance floor. Don't let him take the quiz section, too! Answer the Mario-themed questions, then check your work at **nintendopower.com/quiz.**

1 What name did Nintendo's mustachioed mascot go by before he was known as Mario?
- **a.** Mr. Game & Watch
- **b.** Jumpman
- **c.** Carl
- **d.** Luigi

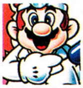
2 Which of these games featured Mario as the villain?



a. Donkey Kong



b. Donkey Kong, Jr.

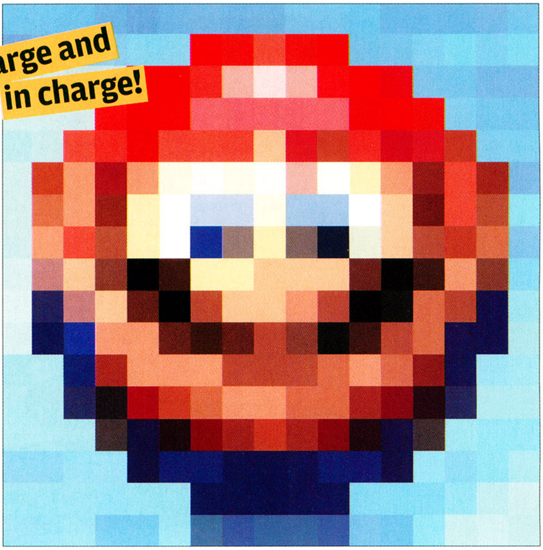


c. Dr. Mario

3 Which one of these professions has Mario never dabbled in?
- **a.** Plumber
- **b.** Doctor
- **c.** Skateboarder
- **d.** Pilot
- **e.** Jailer

4 Which of the following is the title of Mario's puzzle game for the Virtual Boy system?
- **a.** Dr. Mario 3-D
- **b.** Mario Puzzle Challenge
- **c.** Mario Clash
- **d.** Virtual Tetris

5 In Mario and Luigi: Superstar Saga, what does the evil witch Cackletta steal?
- **a.** All the coins in Mushroom Kingdom
- **b.** Queen Bean's crown
- **c.** Princess Peach's voice
- **d.** Mario's hammer
- **e.** Luigi's trousers



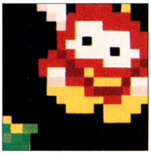
Large and in charge!

PIXEL PERFECT

NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

No, it's not one of those paintings that becomes a schooner if you look at it long enough. It's a zoomed-in portion of a screenshot from a Mario game. Know which one? If you do, go ahead and give yourself a nice pat on the back.

LAST MONTH'S FEATURE:
KID ICARUS (NES)



KID ICARUS
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
Nintendo

6 In which game did Mario wear a sombrero?
- **a.** Alleyway
- **b.** Mario Party 2
- **c.** Qix
- **d.** Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door

7 Which of these games was Mario in?
- **a.** Wario World
- **b.** Donkey Kong 3
- **c.** Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!
- **d.** Donkey Kong Jr. Math

8 In what game does Mario don a frog and a raccoon suit?
- **a.** Super Mario Bros. 2
- **b.** Super Mario RPG
- **c.** Super Mario Bros. 3
- **d.** Super Mario 64

9 Which distinguished actor never played the role of Mario?
- **a.** "Captain" Lou Albano
- **b.** Bob Hoskins
- **c.** Daniel Day-Lewis

10 In Luigi's Mansion, Mario is trapped inside:
- **a.** A bedroom
- **b.** A painting
- **c.** Another dimension
- **d.** A pipe

11 Which of these power-ups from Super Mario Bros. 3 is the rarest?
- **a.** Kuribo's Shoe
- **b.** Mushroom
- **c.** Tanooki Suit
- **d.** Star

12 In Super Mario RPG, who is Mario's first boss battle with?
- **a.** A group of Koopas
- **b.** Bowser
- **c.** A Shy Guy
- **d.** Smithy

13 Tubba Blubba hails from which Mario game?
- **a.** Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars
- **b.** Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
- **c.** Paper Mario
- **d.** Mario Power Tennis

July's answers: 1: b & c (trick question) 2: b (Project BG&E) 3: d (Issue #2) 4: b 5: e 6: c 7: a 8: c 9: b 10: c

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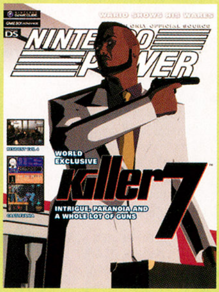
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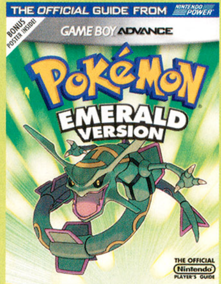
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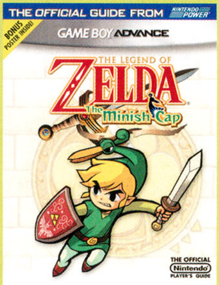
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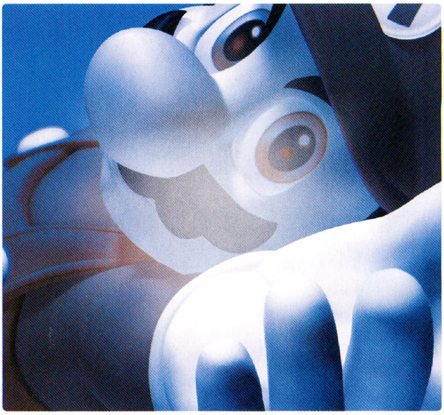

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Prepare for a Sonic blast! Sega's mascot will come out from the shadows to go hog wild with GCN and DS releases this fall. We'll rush you the details on his new gems.

THE MADDEN-ING CROWD

Our coverage of Madden NFL 2006 for the GCN, DS and GBA will hit you like a blind-side blitz.

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Our continuing coverage of Twilight Princess turns to music man Koji Kondo.

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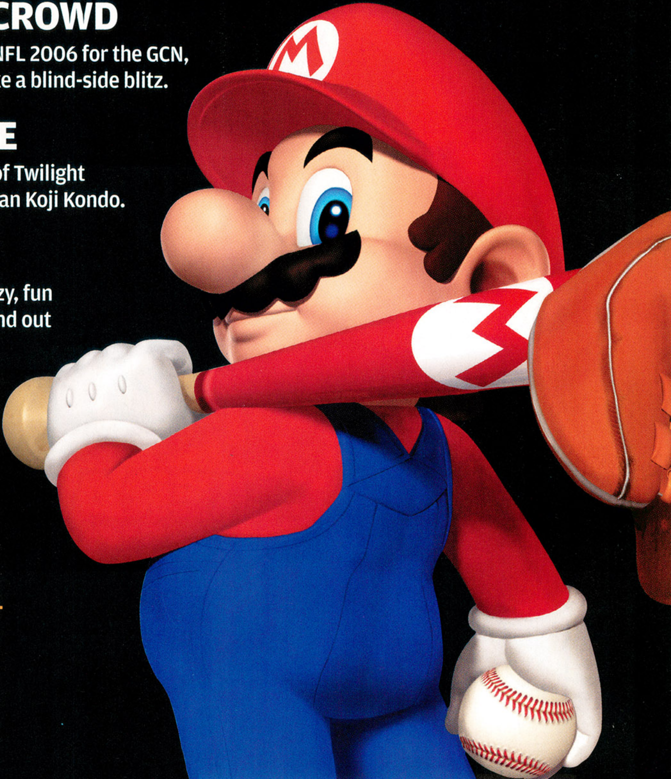
We're slobbering over fuzzy, fun puppy sim Nintendogs. Find out why it makes us melt.



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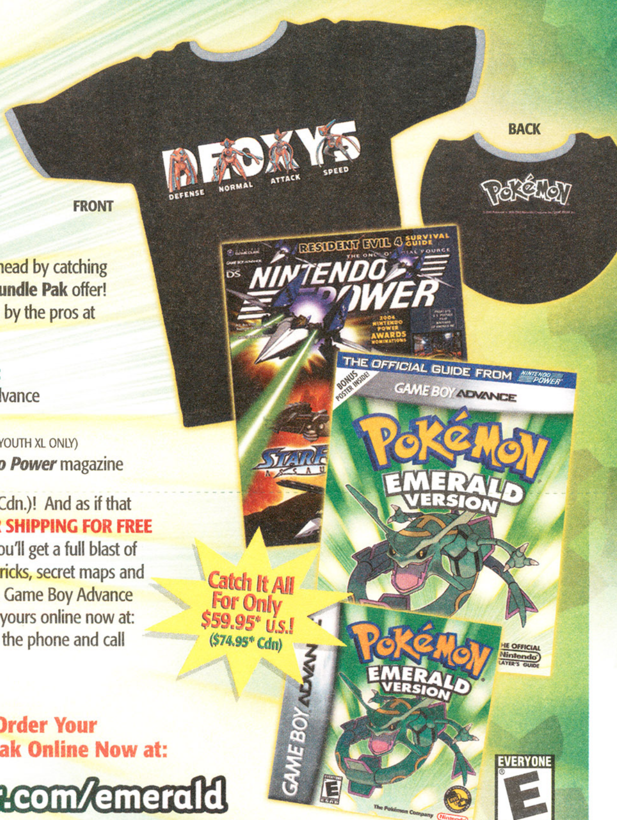
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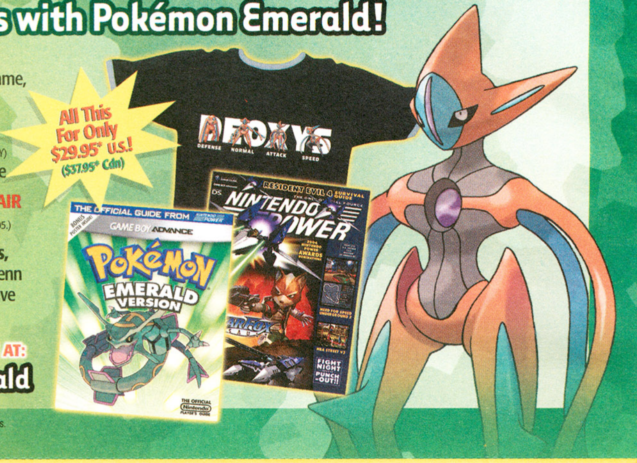
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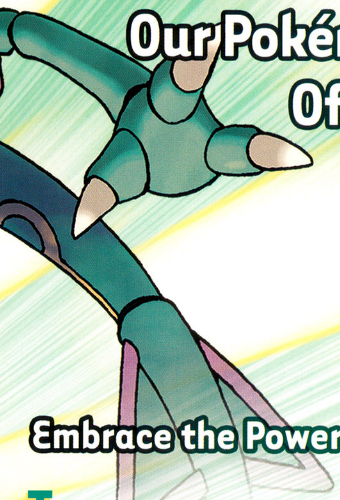

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